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ABSTRACT

This document consists of the first 15 issues of a newsletter reporting on current and upcoming projects of the Philadelphia Folklore Project and examines the place of folklife in people's lives. Topics included revolve around ethnic traditions and celebrations; intergenerational teaching and learning situations; process in cottage industries and methods of training apprentices; approaches and techniques in folk arts and crafts; ethnic cooking traditions; ethnic symbolic design and behavior; raising community awareness of culturally diverse traditions; and implementing public programs and arts. (DQE)

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ED 395 872

Works-in-progress

NEWSLETTER OF THE PHILADELPHIA FOLKLORE PROJECT VOLUME 1 NUMBER 1 OCTOBER, 1987

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Debora Kodish
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Our first newsletter goes to print on the eve of the 98th annual meeting of the American Folklore Society. Two years from now, at the Centennial of the AFS, we will have installed the exhibitions described in these pages, and will be inviting Philadelphia (and folklorists from around the world) to public programs and exhibits examining the place of folklife in our lives.

As we move closer to 1989, we need a way to communicate with all of you who have become our partners in this work: native Philadelphians, members of family businesses, participants in Italian crafts traditions, arts and cultural professionals, community members, and a national network of folklorists. This newsletter will report on our collective progress.

The facts are simple. The PFP officially began operations in January. We can be proud of what we have accomplished and pleased to be able to report so much in these pages. More than twenty projects are already scheduled for 1989, reflecting the time, energy and commitment of individuals at as many institutions. We planned and implemented a survey of folklife resources in Philadelphia, and are completing the first stages of a much-needed Guide. Our field research in city neighborhoods has yielded photographs, tapes, and manuscript materials—all part of our ever-growing archive of information on Philadelphia folk cultural resources. We have provided consultation and resource assessment at more than thirty sites, and we have almost finished research and planning for two major exhibitions (the first to present and interpret folk cultural traditions of Philadelphia's urban neighborhoods). These projects won financial support from private foundations and federal and state agencies. All of this has been accomplished in less than nine months, and with an energetic and resourceful staff.

But such facts neglect the heart of what we do. PFP staff researchers recorded the history of a mom-and-pop store in North Philadelphia, talked to vendors in Logan, consulted with curators in center-city collections, searched Holy Cross cemetery for examples of the work of noted Italian sculptors, recorded the rhymed sales pitches of a pie man. In each of these cases, PFP staff turned local knowledge—wisdom that would have remained private knowledge—into public record. Voices, stories, experiences of individual Philadelphians are preserved. We believe that it is essential that we listen to, and learn from, these voices. Overly dramatic? Romantic? Listening to the people with whom we talk, we think not.

"You have given me wings." Vincent Clerico told Dorothy Noyes, surprised by our interest, but sure of his skills, confident of their importance. Philadelphians are giving us wings, working with us to create public programs in which they are included. Our task is neither simple nor easy. But our goals are clear, and nine months after we have begun we are happy to be joined by so many in the task of broadening our collective understanding of the past and present history of folklife in our city.

Debora Kodish

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A centennial program of The American Folklore Society, the **Philadelphia Folklore Project** conducts research and develops public programs on the city's folklife, past and present. For more information call (215) 238-0096.

SO 026 364

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RESEARCH ON ITALIAN CRAFTS TRADITIONS: *A SUMMARY*

In 1987, the project accomplished a survey of the history and present state of craft traditions in the Philadelphia Italian community. Approximately 200 people have been interviewed to date. They were located through churches, businesses and social organizations as well as through community documents: Italian-language newspapers, pamphlets and programs, directories.

The field research revealed four major areas of artistic activity:

1) Fine Art.

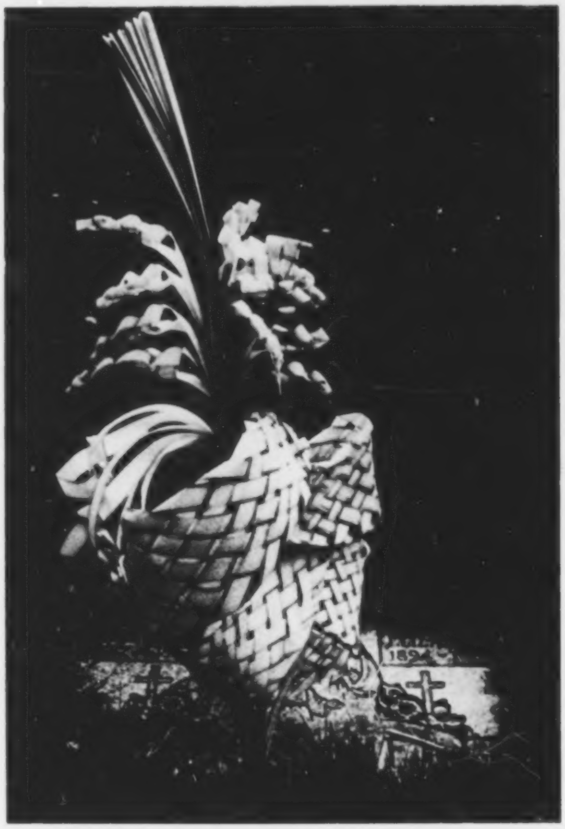
Professional Italo-American sculptors, painters and photographers form a distinctive sub-community in the Philadelphia art world. Formally organized in the DaVinci Art Alliance in the 1930's, they mark their friendships with portraits of each other, serious and playful. Their work reflects a common aesthetic: a traditionally Italian emphasis on clear, balanced design and on the human body as privileged subject.

The importance of high art in Italian ethnic identity is especially apparent in the work of amateurs. Mosaic pictures reproducing everything from Raphael to Modigliani and easel paintings of monuments such as St. Marks', Venice and the Leaning Tower of Pisa fight the stereotype of poverty and ignorance long attached to Southern Italian immigrants by proclaiming the Italian contribution to Western civilization.

2) The Craft Trades.

Italian plasterers, blacksmiths, decorative painters, stonecarvers, carpenters and mosaicists working in the service of named artists and architects shaped Philadelphia landmarks, from William Penn himself to the Chestnut Street movie palaces. Outside the trade, however, their names were never known.

For the individual craftsmen, this mattered very little: love of the work and the respect of their peers was enough. Harder to bear were mechanization, forced retirement, or lack of control in the workplace. Many compensated by setting up basement workshops at home in which they were free to make what they liked and mark it as their own. Hand-wrought iron curtain rods, painted trompe-l'oeil Louis XV bedsteads, elegantly scrolled wooden banisters and marble busts of parents reveal the master's hand we take for granted in more public contexts.

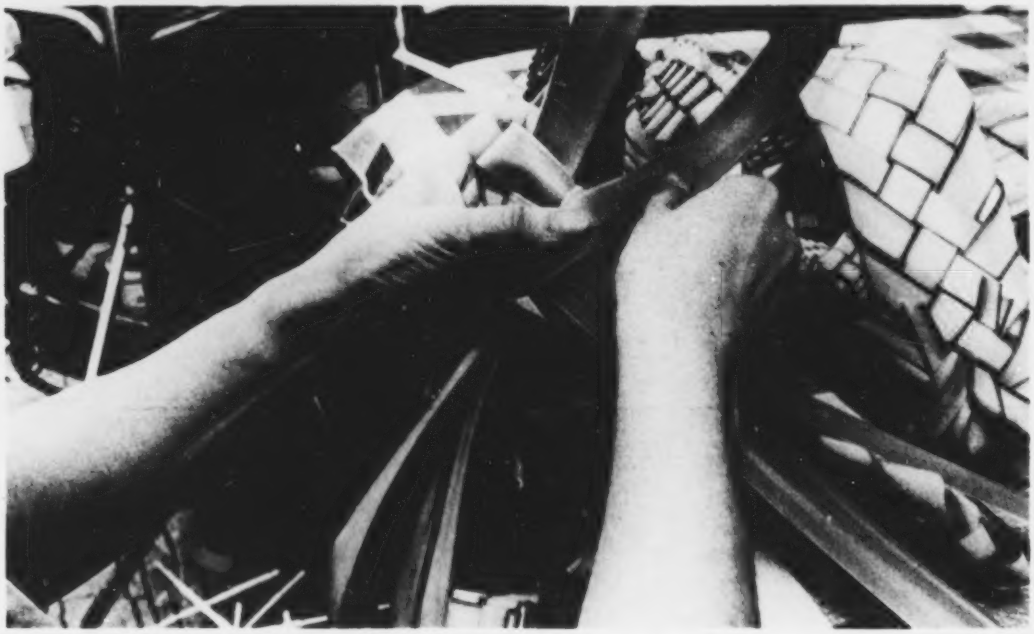


One of Frances Roccia's woven palms, as it is used. (Photo: JOE SOLOWIEJCZYK)

3) Ritual Arts.

The intensification of everyday food, clothing and shelter to acknowledge a holiday or family rite-of-passage is the most vital and universal art-making in the Italian community today. Traditional creches or presepii are recreated annually alongside such innovations as winter landscape painted on living-room mirrors. Saint's day processions make an art out of walking, as does the famous mummer's strut: these neighborhood-based, old and new, religious and civic holidays are the occasion for public statements of private values. The decoration of graves at Palm Sunday and Christmas binds the memory of the dead to the living community.

The continuing demand for traditional ritual goods combined with economic change has created specialist businesses. Pastry shops and florists produce the decorated breads and woven palms formerly made within the family. Immigrant girls working in factories had no time to embroider their trousseaux, so the most skilled made a living sewing for the others. Women's trades are born of ritual occasions, as with the mother working in a tailor shop who made a pretty first Communion dress for her daughter. Subsequent requests from the daughter's friends for communion, prom and finally wedding dresses enabled her to quit her job and go into business for herself.



Frances Roccia at work. (Photo: JOE SOLOWIEJCZYK)

4) The Arts of the Home.

Italian South Philadelphia is witnessing a frenzy of redecoration and remodelling. Old techniques such as marblizing and wood-graining have come back into prominence. Mass-produced wallpapers, furniture and knick-knacks are combined to ornate and luxurious effect. Structural changes to a house one family has lived in for two or three generations declare new affluence but also allegiance to tradition and to the neighborhood: the rush to the suburbs has halted.

The front windows of Italian row houses exhibit collections of disparate objects: silk flowers, ceramic elephants, photos of the Pope, plastic miniatures of Michelangelos. On closer examination, however, the arrangement of these objects reflects the same aesthetic animating the fine arts. As rigorously balanced and symmetrical as Quattrocento triptychs, these window displays reveal the mind's independence from the apparent domination of mass-produced goods and mass media.

Fieldwork is now winding down, and having had our second consultant's meeting in September, we are putting the exhibition into its final form. Likely themes to be stressed include making a mark on Philadelphia, spiritual kinship in the formation of the artist, the continuity of Italian images, and the reinvention of traditional techniques for contemporary purposes. Target date for completion of the plan is December 1st.

We want to thank the more than two hundred Philadelphians who consented to be interviewed for the project. Special thanks also goes to the staff of the Fleisher Art Memorial, particularly Thora Jacobson and Lanny Bergner, for their continuing support and involvement. Thora had the initial idea for this project and has continued to be our valued guide. We are also grateful to our consultants: David Contosta, Richard Juliani, Amy Shuman and Kay Turner. Support for the planning phase of this project was provided by the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission.

Dorothy Noyes
Research Associate

"TRYING TO LEARN THE PEOPLE": *THE FAMILY BUSINESS PROJECT*

Since September there have been four PFP field researchers working on the family business project: Jim Abrams, Deidre Crumbley, Hong-Joon Kim and Stephanie Kane. While interviewing people around the city, our efforts have been directed toward finding elements and concepts with which we can compose an exhibit about kin who work together.

We cast our net widely, examining many-generational businesses and the work of recent immigrants, documenting the different meanings of family and the common traditions of such businesses. To get a diverse sampling of Philadelphia's family businesses, we have roughly divided the city by neighborhood and ethnic group. But we have done this with caution, recognizing how the logistics of our field research may effect our growing understanding of the subject.

So far, we have concentrated mostly on retail businesses: the ones easily accessible in sidewalk reconnaissance. We've interviewed alot of people in the food business: ones who specialize in selling raw fish, produce, poultry, meat; 'Mom and Pop' stores that sell something of everything; and those luncheonettes, bakery shops, hoagie shops and restaurants that serve or sell cooked food. Some are indoors, others are outdoors. Of being outdoors, Betty Anastasi, a fruit vendor in the Italian market says, "This is a world apart. Out here, we have to contend with every element." Living around the corner and loving it, she wouldn't trade that world for any other. The sites for tables and carts are inherited or bought, the jobs divided by gender, family background, ethnic group.

For example, some women won't buy fish, because they refuse to contend with "all that fish talk in the market." Betty Giordano is one who buys fish right out there at 4:30 in the morning with her father and uncle, from whom she learned how to purchase for her own produce business. About the "fish mouth" that makes the task hard for some women, she says: "If they know you, they respect you. They do nothing foul in front of me. If they do, they apologize..."

Virginia Wilkinson talks about her family business to PFP researcher Stephanie Kane. (Photo: JAN GREENBERG)

We see changes in the family businesses we are investigating.

In all the retail family businesses— and we've interviewed people in drug stores, cleaners, beauty salons, department stores, automobile repair shops, spring water companies, janitorial services—constructing and maintaining neighborhood and family relations is the heart of their endeavor. When I asked Betty Ann Mongelluzzo of the Now Clothing Shop how she chooses the clothes she buys, she said "I've been here a good five years, trying to learn the people." Michael Dispigno, who inherited a clientele along with the site and name of Ralph's restaurant, relies on the knowledge that "people only eat where they trust."

For some,

the "family" provides the only possibility of success. Korean-born On Jung Tang voices the knowledge that "you can't have a business without a wife." Assir, an African-American jewelry vendor, believes that it is "up to our generation to make it happen." We recognize that "family" means many things.

People build businesses out of families, and they build families out of businesses. Many family businesses today, if they are successful, expand and hire employees. Other family businesses are "successful" when they close—after providing the means for the next generation to become professionals. In most cases, family businesses cultivate feelings of "family" as a strategy of personnel management, thus generating a whole array of social events: banquets, picnics, Christmas dinners, retirement meals, founders' day sales. These events are commemorated in reflection, photography, inscribed plaques, and even videos, finding places on the walls, shelves, and in the talk of family and employees throughout the year. Such practices are part of the range of folklore genres essential to family businesses. We recognize stories about how businesses began and expanded, about crises and achievements as common to most family businesses—regardless of the differences among such businesses.

In the next months, as we begin to turn this field research into plans for a museum exhibition, we will begin to follow our sources, family business members themselves, in developing a creative form of representation that attracts the sight and that makes connections between people buying and selling all around the city.

Stephanie Kane
Research Associate

OCTOBER UPDATE:
SURVEY OF FOLKLIFE RESOURCES

In March 1987, we began a city-wide survey of traditional arts and folklife resources. A way to examine what folklore has meant to Philadelphians, the survey is also a way for us to identify and support programs that encourage and celebrate our city's folk cultural resources: the rich and diverse traditions that make us truly a city of neighborhoods. The survey will lead to a published *Guide to Philadelphia Folklife Resources.* Materials gathered in the course of our work are housed in our archive.

As the idea for creating a guide for folklife resources in Philadelphia was developed, careful consideration was given to the results of similar survey projects. Dr. Doris Dyen and Dr. Shalom Staub were especially helpful in advising us on design and follow-up procedures. Peter Parker at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, and Dr. John Van Horne, Kenneth Finkel, James Green, Phillip Lapsansky, and Gordon Marshall at the Library Company of Philadelphia have been of great help in working out issues of description.

Basic questionnaire forms currently inquire about collections (manuscripts, private publications, photographs, recordings, and artifacts) and organizations / events (processions, parades, festivals, picnics; performances of music, dance, storytelling and drama; demonstrations of art, craft and other skills). Other questionnaire forms include variations on the topics mentioned above.

Margaret Craig, PFP staff researcher in charge of the survey, has used site visits and telephone calls as means of amplifying questionnaires. In addition, much work went into compiling a mailing list which now includes over 1200 organizations—all potential resources for folklife materials. Ruth Cary has been responsible for computerizing our mailing list and survey responses. A special initiative surveying the city's African-American folklife resources is underway, conducted by staff researcher Jerrilyn McGregory. Organizations described in this phase of the survey include Temple University's well-known Charles Blockson collection and Urban Archives, as well as community-based basketball leagues, jump rope teams, and religious groups. Jerrilyn's work is important in identifying organizations which do not ordinarily make their way into guides and descriptions.

Initial mailings and site visits (to approximately 300 sites) have so far produced 120 descriptions of collections. Additional large mailings are planned for late fall. We are learning that whether they are well-known or little-known, Philadelphia collections contain useful materials for understanding the history of folk traditions, and the history of folklore scholarship. Most of these materials go unlisted in published guides and indices. A wide variety of resources and artifacts are described by completed surveys, including traditional musical instruments, home movies of festivals and other celebrations, a very many scrapbooks and clipping files, painted side panels for fire engines used in Philadelphia parades over the years, tape recordings of oral histories of child care workers, early materials for the study of creole linguistics and manuscripts pertaining to early American folklorists. By describing these materials in the context of the larger collections of which they are a part, we hope to make both materials and collections better known.

Margaret Craig
Research Associate

LOOKING TOWARDS OCTOBER 1989: *A MONTH OF FOLKLORE IN PHILADELPHIA*

Almost one hundred years ago, the newly formed American Folklore Society held its first annual meeting in Philadelphia. Many prominent Philadelphians and important local institutions played key roles. The meaning of folklore has changed over time, as have folk traditions themselves, but Philadelphia has remained an important center for the study of folklife.

For the AFS Centennial in 1989, the Philadelphia Folklore Project is developing public programs examining the history of attention to folklife in Philadelphia, and showcasing current vital city folk traditions. Many local institutions are collaborating in this effort. The following capsule descriptions suggest the range of programs being planned:

L'Artigianato: Italian Crafts Traditions in Philadelphia is scheduled at the **Samuel S. Fleisher Art Memorial**. This exhibition, based on extensive field research by PFP staff and funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission will examine craft traditions practiced in Philadelphia between 1889 and 1939 by Italian immigrants and second and third-generation Italian-American craftspeople.

Family Traditions at Work: Philadelphia's Ethnic Businesses, a second exhibition based on PFP staff research, is scheduled at the **Balch Institute for Ethnic Studies**. This exhibition will distinguish the unique features of the ethnic family business, establish the significance of the folklife traditions of the family firm, and explore the functions of these businesses within ethnic communities.

Philadelphia and the Great Migration is a major temporary exhibition, planned by **The Afro-American Historical and Cultural Museum**. It will examine how migration to Philadelphia altered the nature of the black community. Continuities and changes in African-American folklife—in traditions of art, craft, dress, work, play, performance and display—will provide a means of examining the complex meanings of migration, and the equally complex matter of how people make a city home.

An exhibition on the *Folklore Collections of the American Philosophical Society Library* and a detailed *Guide to Manuscript Sources in the History of the Study of Folklore* in the Library of the American Philosophical Society will be produced at **The American Philosophical Society**. Significant letters, manuscripts, photographs, and other materials from American folklorists and a comprehensive bibliographic listing of holdings on folklife together indicate the importance of the American Philosophical Society to the history of folklife study in this country.

The Historical Society of Pennsylvania is considering an exhibition for the fall of 1989 focusing on folklife in their collection and tracing changes in both the ideas of folklore and materials collected by folklorists—from Chinese proverbs to home movies. As they did 100 years ago, the Historical Society of Pennsylvania will cosponsor the Annual Meeting of the American Folklore Society.

The International House–Folklife Center plans a showcase of Philadelphia folk music and dance for the hundredth anniversary meeting of the AFS. Presenting local traditional artists in concerts, performances, festivals, and school programs since 1977, the International House Folklife Center celebrates both the anniversary of the American Folklore Society and its own important place in the last hundred years of Philadelphia's attention to folklife.

The Library Company of Philadelphia plans a forum with nationally known folklife scholars and the Library Company's own staff, together discussing critical issues in the study of folklife in historical research. In this way, the Library Company hopes both to encourage significant scholarship and to make its own important collections better known.

The National Museum of American Jewish History expects to devote a section of its permanent exhibition to Jewish folklife and to its own pioneering role in developing an ethnographic approach to Jewish folklife. The NMAJH may feature materials and exhibitions on Jewish-American folk art, the lives and culture of New Jersey chicken farmers, Philadelphia Jewish bakers, and Soviet Jewish immigrants in Northeast Philadelphia.

The New Year's Shooters and Mummers Museum's permanent exhibition on mummers' traditions and history is the city's sole ongoing exhibition devoted to a single folk tradition. During the meetings of the American Folklore Society in October 1989, special tours for folklorists will be arranged. Workshops and demonstrations by costume makers and performances by string bands are also under consideration.

The Pennsylvania Heritage Affairs Commission plans to collaborate with the PFP in a survey of ethnic resources in the Philadelphia area. Also under consideration is a possible conference on cultural conservation in the spring of 1988.

The Philadelphia Maritime Museum plans a Maritime Radio Series exploring the history, culture, folklife and uses of Eastern waterfronts. A conference convened at the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress will bring together a national group of consultants to define critical issues facing folklife scholars and museum professionals in documenting, preserving, and interpreting waterfront cultures. In turn, the conference will inform plans for the radio series, and for research in maritime folklife in the Philadelphia area.

The Please Touch Museum plans a major temporary exhibition for 1989, tentatively entitled *Transformations: Folk and Fairy Tales for Children*, exploring a variety of cultural traditions of storytelling and stories.

The Taller Puertorriqueño plans a slide-tape show on the culture and traditions of migrant workers to accompany a photographic exhibition on migrant workers, past and present.

The University Museum of Archaeology / Anthropology, University of Pennsylvania plans an International Symposium on Folk Drama and Ritual, with scholarly papers and performances of folk dramas, scheduled in association with the 1989 international meetings of the American Folklore Society.

Other programs are still in the planning stages. Additional involvement is welcomed. For more information, please call the PFP. (215-238-0096)

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AMERICAN
FOLKLORE
SOCIETY
CENTENNIAL
1988-89

OUR THANKS. . .
TO OUR SUPPORTERS

We appreciate the support, during this first year, of a generous grant from the **Pew Memorial Trust**, with additional support for special collaborative projects from the **National Endowment for the Humanities** and the **Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission**. In-kind contributions have been received from the **American Folklife Center**, the **Balch Institute for Ethnic Studies**, **Business Volunteers for the Arts**, **Collander Data Products**, the **Department of Folklore and Folklife-University of Pennsylvania**, the **Samuel S. Fleisher Art Memorial**, and the **University of Pennsylvania Van Pelt Library**.

TO OUR ADVISORS

From the very beginning, the PFP has depended upon the good counsel of many. Local arts and cultural organizations and national folklorists have provided formal and informal review and ongoing guidance. Our thanks to these advisors, including: **Dr. Roger Abrahams** (Professor and Graduate Chair, Department of Folklore and Folklife, University of Pennsylvania; Chair, Centennial Coordinating Committee); **John Alviti** (Director, Atwater Kent Museum); **Dr. Jane Beck** (Executive Board, American Folklore Society; Director, Vermont Folklife Center, and Vermont Folklorist, Vermont Council on the Arts); **Carole Boughter** (Director of Marketing and Public Relations, Philadelphia Maritime Museum); **Irene Burnham** (Director of Exhibits, Afro-American Historical and Cultural Museum); **Dr. Edward Carter, II** (Librarian, American Philosophical Society); **Ellen Davis** (President, International House); **Dr. Doris Fanelli** (Curator, Independence National Historic Park); **Sandra Gross-Bressler** (Coordinator of Cultural Programs, City of Philadelphia Office of Arts and Culture); **Norma Gwynn** (Director, New Year's Shooters and Mummers Museum); **Bess Lomax Hawes** (Director, Folk Arts Program, National Endowment for the Arts); **John Irizarry** (Director, Taller Puertorriqueno); **Dr. Alan Jabbour** (Director, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress); **Thora Jacobson** (Director, Samuel S. Fleisher Art Memorial); **Timothy Lloyd** (Secretary-Treasurer, American Folklore Society; Traditional and Ethnic Arts Coordinator, Ohio Arts Council); **Dr. Judith McCulloh** (President, American Folklore Society; Executive Editor, University of Illinois Press); **Dr. Yvonne Milspaw** (Executive Board AFS; Senior Lecturer in Communications and the Arts, Harrisburg Area Community College); **Dr. Jeremy Nowak** (Director, Delaware Valley Community Reinvestment

→

NOTICES

Have you been counted

in our **Survey of Folklife Resources**? If you have a collection of Philadelphia material, knowledge about the city, or if you know of collections, organizations, materials and events that we should know about, please call or write us:

The Philadelphia Folklore Project
719 Catharine Street
Philadelphia, PA 19147
(215) 238-0096

We are collecting

Family Business Memorabilia: business cards, calendars, T-shirts, matchbooks, etc. All material received will be listed and acknowledged in a publication accompanying our upcoming exhibition on Philadelphia family businesses.

Our first Folklore Resource Listing,

a **Guide to the Library Company of Philadelphia**, is available upon request. It describes folklife resources in the collection, presents folklorists' perspectives on the institution's holdings, and serves as a sample of how finished survey descriptions are expected to look.

OUR THANKS

Continued...

Fund); **Peter Parker** (Director, Historical Society of Pennsylvania); **Portia Sperr** (Director, Please Touch Museum); **Dr. Shalom Staub** (Director, Pennsylvania Heritage Affairs Commission); **Gail Stern** (Museum Director, Balch Institute for Ethnic Studies); **Rowena Stewart** (Executive Director, Afro-American Historical and Cultural Museum); **Dr. John Van Horne** (Director, Library Company of Philadelphia); **Ephraim Weinberg** (Director, National Museum of American Jewish History); **Dr. Steven Zeitlin** (Director, City Lore).

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Works-in-progress

The Philadelphia Folklore Project
719 Catharine Street
Philadelphia, PA 19147

Works-in-progress

NEWSLETTER OF THE [redacted] VOLUME 1 NUMBER 2 SPRING, 1988

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Many, many organizations in this city are rooted in folk traditions—in the experiences, expressions, and skills of the people they represent or serve. Here at the PFP, we know this in our heads. After an evening listening to budget hearings in City Council chambers, I knew it in my heart.

That night, representatives of non-profit organizations applying for city funding were able to testify for five minutes, on behalf of their groups. We were among the groups scheduled. I expected to talk about the traditional craftsmen who made City Hall's fine ironwork, mosaic tiles, and ornamental plaster ceilings. I planned to urge that we recognize folk artists when they are still practicing, and not when they are gone.

I wanted those listening to see City Hall as a monument to the extraordinary skills and traditions of the many now nameless folk craftsmen who built the place. Listening to those who went before me, I was overwhelmed by the sense that during that evening, in those hearings, City Hall was a living monument to the diverse folk traditions of people from all over the city, from all backgrounds.

A father spoke eloquently on behalf of his son and the Center for Autistic Children, telling the story of his boy's birth and illness in a way that must have touched everyone in the room. He told us a story, more powerful than statistics or speeches. I was so moved by his words that I forgot everything that I knew, as a scholar, about narrative. Stories are folklore, ways in which we shape our personal experiences into common, collective forms. With a "simple" story, he made it possible for us to understand his experience, and that of others. Like the rest of us, he was probably helped by the order and logic of stories, for turning life into narrative is a way in which we all make experience tellable, and sometimes, perhaps less hard to bear.

Other equally powerful accounts filled Room 400. We heard a man working with Holocaust survivors talk about preserving the memories of those who lived through unspeakable horrors. We heard how Philaposh builds legislation by taking seriously the folk culture of working people: the informal knowledge of danger, safety, and health shared within every workplace.

These and other community and arts organizations in this city provide basic and essential services, often on a shoestring, doing miracles daily, making a real difference in the world. From a folklorist's perspective, many of them are in the business of understanding and acting on the folklore of those with whom they work. It is our hope that organizations such as those represented on the Council floor will be represented in the pages of the *Guide to Philadelphia Folklife Resources* that we are compiling, in the archive that we are building, and in the programs that we are coordinating.

City Council hearings were inspiring reminders of the work of those who, without calling themselves folklorists, have long recognized that folk traditions include the essential truths of our lives. Help us to bring attention to the folklore of our city, by whatever name. Help us to document narratives, customs, practices, celebrations, arts, occupational traditions, and play. Help us to describe the important work of those organizations rooted in our city's folklore. You know what we should know, with whom we should talk. Tell us. We invite your counsel.

Debora Kodish

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A centennial program of The American Folklore Society, the **Philadelphia Folklore Project** conducts research and develops public programs on the city's folklife, past and present. For more information call (215) 238-0096.

SURVEY OF AFRICAN AMERICAN FOLKLIFE

Blues, gospel, jazz, double-dutch jump rope, and the dozens are accepted as folklore forms—but what about biblical gardens, drama ministry, pantry parties, Tom Thumb weddings, step shows, and "Let George Do It" affairs? All of these are examples of contemporary Philadelphia folklife, and new elaborations of African American non-verbal tradition. They are also examples of folklore forms organized and perpetuated by social groups: neighborhood friends, a church group, a rec team, a double-dutch group, fraternities and sororities. These traditions most often emphasize group interaction rather than individual skill. Organized by appointed leaders, they are characterized by their own stylized routines, and represent a significant part of contemporary urban African American culture.

Six months ago, I began working on our *Guide to Philadelphia Folklife Resources*, exploring African American organizations in Philadelphia. My task has been to identify how African American community organizations preserve and extend folklife. In the course of interviewing members of more than fifty organizations, I have become aware of a wide range of folk traditions little known to outsiders and folklorists (and mostly taken for granted by those who do know about these traditions). My work is to identify emerging genres of folklore and explore the processes by which these folk arts are created and maintained.

The African American community organizations that I am surveying are dynamic and vital. Although many have roots in southern institutions, they have since acquired their own shape. Gospel groups long recognized as representing vital folk traditions have begun to use other media for communicating their messages. The Porter Family Gospel Singers, for example, now maintain a weekly radio show, day care, and an elementary school. The Evelyn Graves Ministries has developed a self-proclaimed "drama ministry" to win souls for Christ by "giving medicine to all who need it" through their theatrical productions. "The New Rapture," an original drama that I witnessed in a tent one autumn night (replete with effective scenarios of both heaven and hell) is one of seventeen dramas written by the founder Evelyn Graves, who also operates an educational program and performing arts school. Here, I am observing how organizations provide a way for individuals to elaborate their vision within inherited traditions.

William Oliver performing with Groove Phi Groove

The variety and diversity of folklife activities in Black Philadelphia on any given weekend is extraordinary. I have visited African classical dancers and jump-rope teams, documented elaborate family reunions, and

Jarrod Gladney and members of Groove Phi Groove, an African American fraternity from the University of Pennsylvania, in the step show at the Penn Relays. A few years ago, other members of Groove Phi Groove introduced the African American tradition of stepping to audiences at the Smithsonian and the International House—Folklife Center.

PHOTOS
JOE SOLOWIEJCZYK

interviewed members of men's basketball leagues who have their own organizations, naming traditions, and daily rituals. Urban gardening groups (described elsewhere in this issue) assist gardeners in preserving Southern and rural traditions. In many cases, within these traditions there is immense creativity. Blanche Epps, a deeply religious woman, is attempting to grow a sort of biblical garden, planting in her Garden of Gethsemane all the fruits, vegetables, and herbs mentioned in the Bible.

The Lucky Ten Social Club

is a good example of the many structured social groups African Americans have formed in the city—groups which have developed their own traditions and rituals, often reintegrating southern or African folklife. This particular group has met regularly since 1923, when it was started by ten women who migrated from York County, Virginia, with their families. The founders thought they were lucky (therefore, the name) and they saw such a club as one way to combat their feelings of uprootedness. Although the group was first formed as a sewing club, a social outlet and a thrift club, members soon realized they were singing more than sewing. From this realization the Love and Trust Chorus was born. In 1942 the group began an annual pilgrimage back to York County to perform, visit, and renew their ties with family and friends.

The Chorus recently celebrated its 50th Anniversary in the Omega Room of the Shiloh Baptist Church. Two of the original organizers, Flossie Hargraves and Laura Barbour, remain involved in what is now a multigenerational club, including many descendants of the original founders. They entertained me at one of their recent meetings with insights into past teas and cotillions as well as discussions of fundraising events. These include the pantry party, in which grocery store items are raffled, and "Let George Do It" affairs: a tea social which includes a teabag in the invitation to be returned along with a dollar donation. The thrift club origins of the group are preserved in the meeting ritual in which members deposit funds into the "vacation", "savings", and "rainy day" accounts.

In researching these organizations, I am attempting to peel away the different structural layers to better reveal the dynamics which both unite them and set them apart as examples of the expressive impulses among African Americans. The end result should be a segment of the *Guide* which identifies a diverse yet cohesive force invigorating the lives of many Philadelphians. The African American community has a definite dynamic for many vibrant forms of creative expression which the *Guide to Philadelphia Folklife Resources* can make accessible.

Assistance and suggestions are always welcomed. To help, please contact Jerrilyn McGregory at the PFP office.

Jerrilyn McGregory

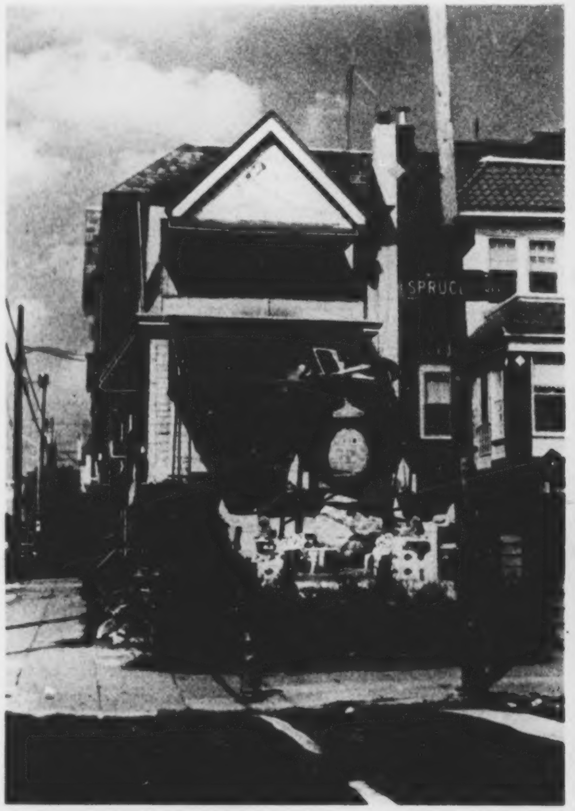
BETTER HOMES & GARDENS: *WHAT THE MAGAZINE WON'T TELL YOU ABOUT PHILADELPHIA LANDSCAPES*

Rows of uniform house exteriors, small front lawns, and abandoned lots: some people see the city as gritty and harsh. Other city residents reshape the environments around them, decorating house fronts, creating yard art, and planting gardens. Urban folklorists have recently begun looking at the ways in which such public folk artists transform the physical landscapes and cultural aesthetics constructed by previous generations of inhabitants. At the PFP, we have been documenting gardening traditions, window displays, yard art, and house facade decoration.

Many of the gardeners we have interviewed participate in "community gardens"—the communally cultivated lots that number in the thousands throughout the city. As a distinct movement in the history of gardening in Philadelphia, community gardens arose in the '70s in response to urban renewal and residential flight to the suburbs. Abandoned buildings that had been razed, leaving rubble and trash-filled vacant lots in their wake, were cultivated into vegetable and flower gardens by concerned neighbors. The problem was that the gardeners did not own the land they worked and were constantly in jeopardy of losing it.

Philadelphia Green (a division of the Horticultural Society) and the Pennsylvania State University Urban Gardening Program were formed in the mid-'70s to assist gardeners in their efforts to "green" the city. They have encouraged gardeners to institutionalize organizational structures in order to run more efficient gardens. This includes establishing garden leaders (usually well-respected cultivators who helped start the garden) who advise fellow gardeners and weed out those who do not meet certain standards. The belief is that a well-organized garden will be more long-lived than a loosely organized one. In addition, the garden programs have provided gardeners with fencing material, seeds, and newsletters and workshops which impart a view of appropriate and effective planting techniques. As folklorists, we are interested in finding out to what extent individual gardeners incorporate these "tips" into their patches and to what extent they draw on family and cultural traditions, or the experiences of other gardeners with whom they have come in contact.

PFP researchers Jerrilyn McGregory, Hong-Joon Kim, and I (Susan Levitas) have conducted fieldwork in Afro-American, Korean, and Puerto Rican gardens in several neighborhoods. Most of the people we interviewed are not native Philadelphians. They came to the city from rural areas where they had either engaged in agricultural work or tended household 'dooryard' gardens. Community garden plots have enabled these migrants to grow traditional foods using previously-acquired skills. For example, Mattie Robbins, a seventy-year-old African American woman from Goldsboro, North Carolina plants vegetables she learned to grow in the family garden back home. As a youngster, she learned from her mother what to plant and how to preserve foods by canning and drying. Her father taught her to plant by the moon and how to grow and save sweet potatoes over the winter, practices she continues. Tomasita Romero, from Puerto Rico, keeps a rooster in her garden. She explained, "I missed the singing in the morning. Oh, it's beautiful. It makes you think of Puerto Rico." For both women, gardens are links with a valued past, and opportunities for creative expression.



Thomas Huggins' yard art. PHOTO: SUSAN LEVITAS

Yard art, house facade decoration, and window display are similar to community gardening in that they are also expressions of personal taste informed by cultural traditions. In these cases, the use of tradition exists in the realm of aesthetics and religion. Individuals have altered house fronts with sculpted and painted designs. Small yards display some combination of assembled sculpture, whirligigs, ceramic figures, and gardens. Window displays exhibit religious icons, seasonal decorations, and ornamental objects.

Ever since Thomas Huggins moved to West Philadelphia, he has been applying his occupational and artistic skills to the repair and ornamentation of his house. Ten years ago, Huggins began building a large bird-bath/weathervane sculpture in his front yard. Today he continues to paint, mold, cast and assemble decoration on the interior and exterior of his house. As a former professional ornamental ironworker, Huggins views his decoration as demonstration of his abilities. In a similar way, Doley Green's bird-feeders, ornamental borders, and roof garden, prominent in front of his home on Bainbridge, are the way they are because of Green's lifetime of experience at building and fixing.

Public folk artists, cultivators and creators, like Huggins, Green, Robbins and Romero reshape the urban environment. To do this, they draw upon and extend the familial, cultural and occupational traditions in which they are expert. Part of our job, here at the PFP, is to learn more about the community traditions, the contexts, and the resources with which such urban artists work.

Susan Levitas

ABOUT ITALIAN PLASTERERS, PALMS AND ARTISTS...

Last fall, Italian craftsman Oreste Unti and the PFP organized a reunion of artisans, all workers in plaster orginally from the mountain town of San Quirico in the Bagni di Lucca, the center of the plaster trade in Italy. We planned the reunion in order to consult with these craftsmen about the exhibition that the PFP and the Fleisher are planning for 1989 on Italian crafts traditions—an exhibition in which the traditions and experiences of these artisans will be included. Many of those attending had not seen one another for some time, and the reunion provided an occasion for them to reminisce. PFP researchers were ready with a tape recorder and with questions about the traditions and history of the plaster business in Italy and America. Information gathered at the reunion led to subsequent interviews.

Plaster workers from Bagni di Lucca have been emigrating for centuries, peddling figurines or doing ornamental work on buildings. They first came to Philadelphia in large numbers in the late 19th century, when they worked on such major projects as the Bourse and City Hall's statue of William Penn. In the twenties and thirties, ornamental plaster firms such as the Voigt Company employed large numbers of primarily Italian workers, who provided ornate ceilings for movie palaces and luxury hotels.

Other Lucchese plaster workers formed small statuary businesses. Jerry Pieri remembers that they made enough Nipper dogs for Victor Talking Machine Company "to go around the world three times." In the twenties, they set up factories making religious artifacts, a trade which flourished until Vatican II, when statuary was discouraged by the church. A few of these factories survive today, mostly producing lamps; other craftsmen have turned to more specialized work, such as sculpture casting. The adaptations of these skilled craftsmen and their art to the demands of the marketplace will be treated in part of the exhibition.

MORE ON THE ART OF PALM-WEAVING

Last year, we began to document the folk art of palm-weaving. This year, Jan Greenberg and I, working with the assistance of skilled photographers Pat Armenia and Ed Seiz, have been documenting all the stages of the process of making, selling, and using palm-weavings as part of Palm Sunday observances. Most of the Philadelphia Italian-Americans who weave palms learned the art from other family members. Distinct differences in patterns and processes are evident within each of these family traditions. This year, the PFP team was happy to be able to work closely with Frances, Barbara and Brian Roccia, Betty Ann Mongeluzzo and Trish Ciliverti, and members of Our Lady of Consolation parish in Tacony (especially the Anthony Gatti family)—all of whom are responsible for beautiful work (and whom we want to thank again for their help). Jan and I will be developing a slide-tape show from these photographs, to be incorporated in the exhibition in 1989. If you know more about palm-weaving, give us a call at the office.

ARTIST FINDS APPRENTICE

Yola Savastano, one of the traditional artists featured in the April 3, 1988 *Inquirer Sunday Magazine* article on the work of the PFP, received numerous phone calls in response to the description of her fine beadwork. We are happy to report that, as a result, she will be taking on an apprentice this summer, something she has long wanted.

Dorothy Noyes

CAMBODIAN AND LAOTIAN NEW YEAR'S CELEBRATIONS VIDEOTAPED

Celebrations

of Cambodian and Laotian New Year's took place in Philadelphia in mid-April. Involving Buddhist religious observances, ritual, dance, music, feasting, and other special folk arts and traditions, the ceremonies are important to the sacred calendar of many Southeast Asian people living in Philadelphia. This year, New Year's traditions were documented through the collaboration of four organizations: The Cambodian Association of Greater Philadelphia, the Lao Family Community Organization, the Southeast Asian Mutual Assistance Coalition and the Philadelphia Folklore Project. PFP Folklorist Joan Gross worked with Glen Muschio and a video crew from SEAMAAC to develop a visual record of these important community traditions, and to explore ways in which cultural traditions may be preserved for community members themselves and explained to outsiders.

Extensive preparation went into both the Cambodian and Laotian New Year's celebrations, with many community members involved in creating ceremonial objects, readying the temple, making food, and in other ways preparing for the celebration. Cambodian women were working in the temple a week before the ceremony, sewing fabric and folding foil into decorations for one of the four altars. Cambodian men were pounding and sawing as they constructed the middle altar where the sacred mounds of sand would be built. In the back of the room musicians and dancers were practicing. Laotians did much of their preparation in their own homes, constructing *mark beng* and money trees which would be used in processions.

Preparation for New Year's begins long before April. Those participating in the festivity begin to learn the arts of this ritual when they are quite young. Girls trained in classical Cambodian dance, like Socheatey Shagin, begin at an early age in the discipline required by this art, rubbing lemon grass on their hands, bending their fingers so that they can one day achieve the delicate movements of traditional dance. (See photo.)

A traditional New Year's observance includes three days of festivity, with different rituals and activities occuring on each day. According to both Cambodian and Laotian traditions everything has to be well cleaned before the New Year, including your mind and heart. This is a time to forgive and forget, to begin a new life. Rituals that are part of the New Year's observance symbolize this new beginning. For example, Cambodians welcome a new angel on the first day. The following day, respect is paid to the monks, ancestors and spirits. On the third and last day, you make up with your enemies, play games and enjoy yourself.

Socheatey Shagin practices a dance (Robam Tep Manorom) for the Cambodian New Year's celebration.

PHOTO: JOAN GROSS

This traditional sequence has been disrupted by life in America where almost everyone works or attends school, where Buddhist temples are not that common, and where Buddhist monks are not always part of every community. Here in Philadelphia, the Cambodians celebrated the 13th, 14th, and 15th at their temple, but they held a special and much bigger celebration on Saturday the 16th at the Armory for all the community members who could not attend religious ceremonies during the work week. The Laotians had to postpone their celebration for a week and a half because they have no temple in Philadelphia and had to wait for Laotian monks to arrive from Virginia.

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The videotape of this year's festivities will be available for viewing by appointment at SEAMAAC. It documents the extensive preparation and rehearsal, beautiful dance and music performances, important ritual observances, and elaborate processions that are part of both Laotian and Cambodian ceremonies. New Year is a time for telling fortunes and making wishes. We would like to take this opportunity to wish "Happy New Year!" to all the people who worked hard to make these wonderful celebrations possible.

Joan Gross

Philadelphia Folklore Project News

We are happy to announce receipt

of the following grants: from the Pew Memorial Trust, a generous grant of $250,000 for PFP operating expenses in 1988 and 1989; from the National Endowment for the Humanities, a grant of $40,837 awarded to the PFP and the Balch Institute in support of planning for our collaborative exhibition on ethnic family businesses in Philadelphia; from the Pennsylvania Humanities Council, a grant of $1000 in support of catalog research for our collaborative exhibition with the Fleisher Art Memorial on Italian craft traditions, and from the National Endowment for the Arts—Folk Arts Program, technical assistance (in the persons of consulting folklorists Elaine Eff and Nick Spitzer). We are grateful for the support of these institutions.

Reading Market is the site of research

by PFP staff folklorist Susan Levitas, who is assisting the family business team by documenting the folk traditions of family businesses at the marketplace. Susan is also evaluating the significance of the folk cultural traditions in this endangered urban space.

Talking about Philadelphia Folklore

has taken us from Albuquerque to our own City Hall. PFP staff have been busy speaking about Philadelphia folk traditions and the work of the Project. Last October, a special session of the American Folklore Society annual meeting included papers and presentations by PFP researchers Jim Abrams, Margaret Craig, Jan Greenberg, Stephanie Kane, Debora Kodish, and Dorothy Noyes. In addition, Jim Abrams described the Project in a session at Temple University, at Judith Goode's invitation. Debora Kodish spoke about "Public Folk Art in Philadelphia" at the Public Art Conference in Philadelphia, and gave the opening talk ("At the Heart of the City: Mummers and Contemporary Philadelphia Folk Arts") at the Art in City Hall exhibition, "Mummery." She also provided overviews of the work of the PFP at a Museum Council meeting, a program meeting of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and an open house at the Pennsylvania Humanities Council. She submitted written testimony on behalf of the folk arts in Pennsylvania to the PAC/PCA hearings on the arts.

Planning meetings for the family business

project were held at the Balch Institute in February and May, including PFP and Balch staff as well as consultants. Interviews with members of Philadelphia family businesses continue. For more information about the project, contact Jim Abrams at the PFP office.

Welcome and thanks

to new PFP advisor Sandra Choukroun, Executive Director, International Visitors Center of Philadelphia.

Philadelphia Folklore Month

Organizations already scheduling programs for Philadelphia Folklore Month met for a planning meeting at the Fleisher on March 30. Reports on progress were given by those present. Newly announced projects for October 1989 include an exhibition on folk art and a published *Guide to Folklore Materials in the Collections* at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. An exhibition and related programs on Pennsylvania German Folk Art is now scheduled at the German Society. The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts announced their interest in developing an exhibition on contemporary Philadelphia-area folk art. (For a summary of other programs already announced, see *Works-in-progress 1:1*).

Other institutions which hope to develop projects include: Atwater Kent Museum; Grand Lodge Free and Accepted Masons; Independence National Historical Park; Library Company of Philadelphia; National Museum of American Jewish History; City of Philadelphia Department of Recreation; Polish American Cultural Center; Southeast Asian Mutual Assistance Coalition; Temple University Center for Black History and Culture; and Thomas Eakins House.

A second meeting, to be scheduled in the fall, will bring together neighborhood and community groups with interest in participating in Philadelphia Folklore Month. If your organization presents or preserves Philadelphia Folklore, then we encourage you to become involved. Guidelines and schedules are available from Elisabeth Lightbourn at our office. Let us hear from you.

EVERYDAY LIFE IN PHILADELPHIA: *WORKSHOPS ON RECORDING FOLKLORE*

Folklife topics relating to everyday life in Philadelphia were recorded as part of the winter workshops offered by the PFP at the Afro-American Historical and Cultural Museum. During four sessions, and in outside assignments, participants recalled and recorded memories of racial prejudice, the Great Depression, and growing up in Philadelphia neighborhoods. The customs and beliefs of childhood (including "do's and don'ts" or "taboos" of growing up), and traditions of church-going were also topics generating much interest.

Workshops, led by the PFP's Stephanie Kane and Jerrilyn McGregory, considered such practical matters as how to use a tape recorder, how to define a topic for investigation, what to record, and how to catalog a tape for deposit in an archive. Afro-American Museum staff and participants hope to continue the recording project initiated through these workshops, cataloguing the recordings as part of the Museum collection on the folklife and oral history of Black Philadelphians.

"How to" workshops are part of our programs in technical assistance. If you or your organization are interested in scheduling similar workshops, contact Elisabeth Lightbourn at our office: 238-0096

Works-in-progress

Newsletter of the Philadelphia Folklore Project
1:2 (Spring 1988)

Director	Debora Kodish
Archivist/media specialist	Jan Greenberg
Program director	Betsy Lightbourn
Secretary	Lyndia Johnson
Family business project	Jim Abrams Stephanie Kane Hong-Joon Kim
Guide	Joan Gross Jerrilyn McGregory
Italian crafts project	Dorothy Noyes
Special projects	Susan Levitas

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Works-in-progress

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Works-in-progress

NEWSLETTER OF THE PHILADELPHIA [illegible] VOLUME 2 NUMBER 1 FALL, 1988

FROM THE DIRECTOR

"Strawbridge

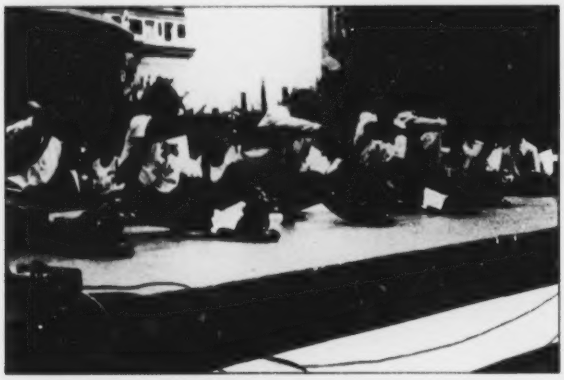
and Clothier's is as distinctively Philadelphian as Carpenter's Hall or the Betsy Ross House," the **Philadelphia Inquirer** wrote in 1943. The paper was ahead of its time in seeing that a family business (like a civic monument) could hold meaning for city dwellers. Described in these pages are other traditions rooted in city life: the Greek Picnic, exquisite beadwork, elaborate Sweet Sixteen parties, and wedding photo-sessions in Fairmount Park. These traditions remind us that there are many ways to be Philadelphian.

But the **Inquirer** was on to something when it singled out a family business. Family firms have their own traditions: stories about origins, growth, successes, and tragedies, rituals marking changes of status within the firm. Harry Ochs had to master half-a-dozen tasks in his father's butcher stall at the Reading Terminal Market before he was allowed to pick up a knife. Strawbridge and Clothier family members must successfully apprentice in other department stores, (proving themselves away from their kin), before they are given responsibility for the family firm. These sorts of inside traditions make family businesses special, and help them endure.

Long-lasting family firms are often like touchstones for those of us on the other side of the counter. They bring back memories of personal experiences, of good times and bad. Dennis Clark talks about a Kensington family business, a shoe store that extended credit to his family in the middle of the Depression so that his sister could have shoes for her First Communion. Many people have their own stories of being "carried" (or denied) by family firms during hard times. When our experiences overlap with those of our neighbors, they become collective traditions with a distinctively Philadelphia feel.

Many other dependable city features enter our folklore. Public spaces and gritty city pavements are regularly turned into stages for traditional art and display. Jerrilyn McGregory tells how people appropriate the lush foliage and wide lawns of Fairmount Park for their wedding photos, and Joan Gross talks about processions of elaborately decorated limousines carrying lavishly dressed young women through city streets in celebration of a Sweet Sixteenth birthday. These traditions have become Philadelphians' ways of celebrating important events. As always, we invite your help in making a record of traditions that, like these, make the city human, liveable, and comfortably home.

Debora Kodish



Wizards on Wheels smoothly combine break dancing, acrobatics, and other artful movements, all on roller skates. Here they perform at JFK plaza during Philly Fest. More description of how folk arts helped Philadelphians keep their cool in "Beating the Heat" (p. 6).
PHOTO: JERRILYN MCGREGORY

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A centennial program of The American Folklore Society, the **Philadelphia Folklore Project** conducts research and develops public programs on the city's folklife, past and present. For more information call (215) 238-0096.

La Princesa for a Day: Sweet Sixteens in Philadelphia

Carmen

Neris was given the choice. She could have a thousand dollars to use for a car or she could have a Sweet Sixteen Party (or Quinceañera) for her birthday. Since she was a child she had been dreaming about a Sweet Sixteen Party, but as the date approached she began to think that a car might be a better idea. As soon as her relatives found out she wanted a car, they began talking to her. "You're only sixteen once, Carmen—a party is something you'll remember your whole life," they said. Two months before her birthday, she approached her mother and asked if she could change her mind.

Her mother said that if Carmen could make all the arrangements, she would pay for it. September is a busy month for Sweet Sixteens and weddings so she knew that it would be difficult to pull together a successful party. Thanks to sympathetic people and much help, everything fell into place.

Annette Quiñones and Augustine Balaguer were hired to choreograph and teach dances for the presentation. When at first Carmen couldn't find any available limousines, her brother Louis offered to rent a Rolls Royce for her. (Presidential Limo Service was eventually able to supply limos, so she had both.) Gloria Cruz made Carmen's beautiful white gown like one she had seen in the latest Puerto Rican fashion magazine. Gloria also made gowns for Carmen's mother, godmother, and the eight girls in the court of honor— and she did this in a single week. Carmen helped with some of the bead and sequin work and made the hats and gloves.

At St. Henry's Church, Father Michel rehearsed the teenagers for the mass, and Mary Baxter played the organ and sang a spellbinding "Ave Maria." Maritza's Gift Shop decorated the church and hall, and made both the capias that are pinned on every guest and the souvenirs which are given to the participating couples and other special guests. Traditional roast pig, white-tiered cake, and other delicacies were consumed with great gusto at Hector and Norma's Hall on 5th and Erie. The day was recorded in pictures by "Dennis the photographer" who has been photographing weddings and Sweet Sixteen Parties for twenty-five years.

"La Princesa"

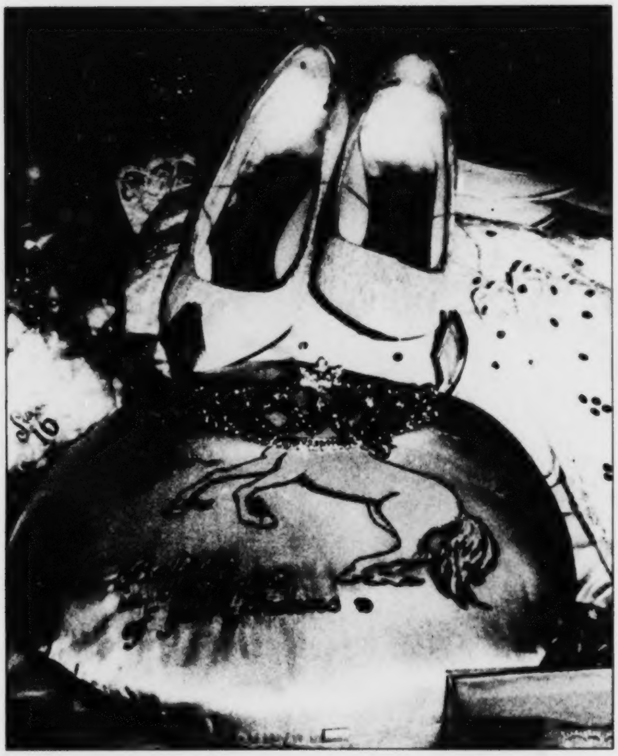
is what they call the birthday girl, and for one day, she is royalty. Family coffers are opened wide to provide her with all the accoutrements to astonish onlookers with the sumptuousness of the event.

Carmen Neris is crowned by her mother, Gloria Toledo. Her father, Pedro Neris looks on. Hector Serano, a "lucky charm," carries the high heels that she will soon wear.

PHOTOS: JOAN GROSS

La Princesa is usually crowned by her maid of honor at the church; Carmen also asked to be recrowned at the hall by her mother, after her godmother removed her floor length cape. As she sat in her decorated throne, her father removed her flat white slippers. He replaced them with white high heels, signifying her entry into adulthood, and then led her to the dance floor for a waltz. Soon, however, he handed her over to her escort, Victor Guzmán. In unison, the whole court danced: first a waltz, then a merengue. As Carmen returned to her throne, each member of her court received a lit candle. They paraded by her one by one, and she made a wish, blew out each of the sixteen candles, and received a kiss on the cheek.

Before dancing began (to the music of the salsa band, La Opinión), Carmen presented those who had helped her with certificates of appreciation. She had much to be thankful for, much to be proud of. Her party had been a success.



Piled high on her bed before the ceremony are Carmen's crown, her high heels with the pillow on which they'll be carried, and capias.

When

I approached Carmen before the event was to happen, she instantly agreed to a folklorist's visit on that day when she was to be everyone's center of attention. We at the PFP were honored to be invited to a folkloric event such as this. Female rites of passage marking entry into adulthood are found in cultures all over the world. In spanish-speaking cultures they have reached a high level of elaboration. As a rite of passage, the Sweet Sixteen is a traditional way of marking a change in social status. A complex form, it includes many traditions, such as the ritual at the church, the making of souvenirs, the preparation of special clothes and food, and the procession through the neighborhoods. All of these activities are found in another rite of passage which marks the change in status from being single to being married. This is a connection seen by people in the Puerto Rican community. In fact, many girls save their Sweet Sixteen gowns and even their rhinestone crowns for their weddings.

One bystander asked members of Carmen's procession: "Es una boda?" (Is it a wedding?). Out of the top of a limo, one of the court members responded: "No, Es un Sweet Sixteen." "Es lo mismo." (It is the same) was the reply. But, although the appearance is the same, the final outcome is not, because the girl goes back to her parents' home. She is creating a memory, not a marriage, and her nervousness is directed towards presenting a successful performance. In a sense, it is a rehearsal for an eventual wedding, but many girls are not at all sure whether they will have a big wedding. Some are not even sure they'll get married, but they've always known they would turn sixteen and some have been planning their party for several years.

Anita

Ruiz was one of these girls and her Sweet Sixteen party in August is still the talk of the town. A string of horse drawn carriages led by a vintage 1927 automobile paraded the group around the city. Anita had been planning this ever since she saw the televised wedding of Prince Charles and Princess Diana. Further inspiration came from a video of "Cinderella," which she saw two years ago. People in the crowd were heard whispering that it was just like Cinderella. Another fairy tale also entered into the performance. The march from the "Sleeping Beauty Ballet Suite" was played as her opening number. Anita's Sweet Sixteen was so lovely that many of her friends who were planning to ask for cars or a cruise now want to have a party.

A Sweet Sixteen or Quinceañera is the parents' chance to present their daughter to society. (The latino communities here know that this event occurs on a girl's fifteenth birthday back home, but in Philadelphia it is more often converted from a Quinceañera to a Sweet Sixteen.) It used to mark the age at which a girl could begin dating a boy and still has that function in many families. But the girl takes an active role in shaping the event that marks these changes. She is the one who plans the event and makes most of the arrangements. She is also the one who monitors her court to make sure they take the dance rehearsals seriously. In short, while her parents pay for the ceremony to show their love of her, she demonstrates to her parents and the community at large that she can act as a responsible adult.

We would like to thank Iris Pagan, Augustine Balaguer, and Annette Quinoñes who led us to Carmen Neris, and to especially thank Carmen and her family who were so gracious as to make us feel welcome at the festivities. We also want to thank Anita Ruiz and her family who, although we missed the party, filled us in with all the documentation they had arranged and were even so kind as to donate a videotape of Anita's Sweet Sixteen to the PFP archives. Here at the PFP, we have become so interested in the Philadelphia Sweet Sixteen tradition that we would like to document it further and put together a slide tape show. If any of our readers have some ideas about this project or would like to donate programs, photos, or videotapes from their own Sweet Sixteens or Quinceañeras, we would greatly appreciate it.

Joan Gross

PASSING ON TRADITIONS

Publicity has uses that are not always immediately apparent. When the PFP brought a **Philadelphia Inquirer** reporter and photographer to Yola Savastano's sewing room, she bore it patiently at first. After two hours of sitting at the loom while the lights were being adjusted for a magazine-quality color print, she began to complain, especially when a hot lamp set one of her patterns on fire.

After the April 3, 1988 **Inquirer** Sunday magazine piece featuring Yola's beading on lace came out, Yola was still patient under a barrage of phone calls from enterprising salespeople and hopeful brides-to-be. "I'm retired," she repeated. "I don't do beading anymore."

But a letter which came a few weeks later repaid her for her forbearance. Harriet G. Fry, a seamstress and freelance writer for needle arts magazines, wanted to learn how to do the beading.

Yola had already refused a request from a woman of her own age. "I said to her, 'What are you going to do with it?'," she recalls. But here was a young woman, someone who would "really put it to use." This was the return Yola wanted for her trouble.

Yola had learned the art of beading lace on a loom from "an old Italian lady, just like me" named Margie. Margie approached her at a wedding for a bride whose dress Yola had beaded by hand and asked her if she'd like to learn an easier way. Yola went to Margie's house one evening after work, a few blocks from her own in South Philadelphia, and sat in her kitchen bent over the loom until midnight. She went back a few more times until she had mastered the basic stitch. Then she experimented at home, figuring out how to "strike a line" following the pattern of the lace, how to turn corners, how to "walk" the needle between lace flowers to avoid repeated casting on and off, how to make "daisies" of bunched beads, and how to dye the beads with onion-skin or tea leaves to make them show against the dress.

When Margie saw Yola's first loom-beaded dress and the innovations Yola had made, "Oh, she kissed me! She said "this art is not going to die!"

Both Margie and Yola's concern for the survival of their art reflects the difficulty of adapting certain traditions to the demands of the marketplace. Beading is extraordinarily labor-intensive: a ten-inch square of lace may take a fast worker two hours, and wedding dresses use yards of the stuff. Yola's hourly wage came to far below the minimum. She was able to do the beading only because she worked in her own home, with low overhead and assistance from her family, and because she loved the work and didn't mind sitting up long hours over the loom.

So when Yola heard from Harriet Fry, she was pleased to discover that Harriet was a young mother who worked at home, a few blocks from Yola's house, who sewed for her family and for pleasure and hoped to do First Communion and wedding dresses to supplement her income. The PFP's Jan Greenberg discovered when she went to take this photograph that Harriet is like a young Yola in other ways as well: fast-talking, chainsmoking, practical. Harriet and Yola hit it off at once, and have spent the summer in Yola's air-conditioned dining room with the loom wedged between the table and the sideboard. Now that Harriet has learned the basics, they are working together on a piece of lace for the Fleisher/PFP exhibition, "The Uses of Tradition: Arts of Italian Americans in Philadelphia," to be at the Fleisher Art Memorial in September-October of 1989. They sit on opposite sides of the loom, Harriet muttering to herself

Yola Savastano and Harriet Fry working at the loom.

PHOTO: JAN GREENBERG

as she goes over the difficult sections. Yola looks up now and then to check her pupil's progress, and tells Jan, "She's got it now, she's really got it."

Harriet wrote to Yola because she had been looking for years in vain through sewing publications for something on lace beading, one of those traditions which are handed down from woman to woman and not through books and formal instruction. In the case of lace beading, even the tools have been lost. Yola's wooden looms were made by her husband to Margie's instructions; the new looms for the PFP piece and for Harriet have been made by Yola's daughter. The needles—tiny metal hooks on bone handles—are, to Yola's knowledge, no longer available even in New York's garment district, so she has given one of her precious few to Harriet.

But Harriet is in a position to spur renewed interest in the tradition. While she intends to use the beading on her own account, she also plans to write about it: she will do some articles about the technique as well as a profile of Yola. She and Yola have already talked about adapting the technique to other kinds of materials, stimulated by a visit to Yola from the Catalan artist Miralda, who wanted advice on how to construct a gigantic bridal veil for a festive work that he is planning. Like most traditional artists, Yola is much less conservative than the average scholar or folk art collector. She is interested in new applications both as challenges to her skill and as ways of preserving its utility. Public sector folklife can assist such people in finding new avenues.

Dorothy Noyes/Jan Greenberg

PHILADELPHIA FOLKLORE MONTH

Question:

What will happen in October 1989, involve more than forty organizations, and feature folk traditions that enrich and enliven our city?

Answer:

Philadelphia Folklore Month. Organized by the PFP, the Month aims to increase understanding of the city's many folklife traditions, to link diverse communities, organizations, and traditional artists, and to develop ongoing resources for the folk arts.

At a recent meeting, groups confirmed the following plans:

Afro-American Historical and Cultural Museum: "Black Folklife in Philadelphia," a major exhibition and supporting programming exploring aspects of Black folklife that enabled African American migrants from the South to cope, thrive and make Philadelphia home.

American Folklore Society: 100th Annual Meeting with scholarly papers, films, videos, and book displays.

American Philosophical Society: "The Folklore Collections of the American Philosophical Society Library," an exhibition of significant letters, manuscripts, photographs, and other materials from American folklorists, and "Guide to Manuscript Sources in the History of the Study of Folklore in the Library of the APS," a comprehensive listing.

Balch Institute for Ethnic Studies (and the **Philadelphia Folklore Project**): "Family Traditions at Work: The Folklife of Family Businesses in Philadelphia," an exhibition on the historical and contemporary significance of family businesses, as shown by folk traditions of people within such firms. Also possible tours of family businesses around the city, demonstrations, talks, and films.

Cliveden of the National Trust: Family folklore programs.

Samuel S. Fleisher Art Memorial (and the **Philadelphia Folklore Project**): "The Uses of Tradition: Italian American Crafts in Philadelphia," an exhibition of craft traditions created by Italians and Italian Americans in Philadelphia with special attention to the way in which tradition and memory shape these works. Also a "Symposium on Italian and Italian American folklore," (in collaboration with the American Folklore Society), walking tours, and traditional craft classes.

Folklife Center of International House: "Folk Music Traditions of the Delaware Valley," a concert/dance party featuring local and regional performers representing various ethnic communities in the Philadelphia and Delaware Valley area. Also "Folk Artists in the Schools," with scheduled visits to school sites to see this educational program in action.

German Society of Pennsylvania: "Pennsylvania German Hex Signs," an exhibition. Also a program series on Pennsylvania German traditions including theatrical performances, poetry readings, musical events, and historical tours.

Historical Society of Pennsylvania: Possible kids' summer history camp on an aspect of Philadelphia folklife, and possible lunch programs/lectures.

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BEATING THE HEAT

Summer's

heat wave is history, but the PFP archives now preserve a special view of how city residents persevered. Following are some examples of how Philadelphians drew on folk traditions, and endured summer in the city.

On a steamy June afternoon, nineteen senior citizens from the Clara Baldwin Center received diplomas in a mock graduation, accepting awards in such categories as most fashionable, best attendance, and eating the longest. For many, this was their first diploma. The good-natured ceremony, organized by and for older adults, both gently parodied and borrowed from 'formal' graduations. This was just the first of many folk dramas and celebrations that I witnessed this summer.

Wedding bells continued to ring despite the heat and Philadelphians continued their own ways of celebrating. Fairmount Park, behind the Art Museum, remains a popular spot for after-the-ceremony photo sessions. For these tableaux, images that will be preserved forever, celebrants prepare elaborate automobile decorations, using paper flowers, streamers, balloons, bells, and dolls to bedeck luxury vehicles (always matching the color scheme and taste of each bride and groom.) Sonny Nunez and seven other members of the North Philly Toyota Mazda Club provided the ultimate entourage with showstopping customized cars. These displays represent the height of aesthetic elaboration that now characterizes an occasion long associated with style and splendor.

Double-dutch

jump rope has been of interest to folklorists because of its origins as a folk game. Today it has evolved into a stylized sport. At the Eastern Pennsylvania Championships, each team has one minute to exhibit its tricks, acrobatics, creative turning, and dance. Competitive double-dutch is developing its own traditions, too. The older girls teach these routines to the younger girls, as Devastation Double Dutch team members Gail O'Brien and Valerie Giddings (a five-year veteran at fourteen years old) pointed out to me. Kariamu Welsh Asante, who supervises the Kuumba Double Dutch Team, an organized team, evaluates competence according to a long list of identifiable skills. But the street variety of double-dutch has also evolved its own equally complex rules. Just meeting one another for the first time, kids negotiate the terms of the game for themselves.

African American fraternities and sororities dominated Fairmount Park with an estimated 30,000 students in July. The Greek Picnic began as a spontaneous affair a number of years ago. This year, for the first time, it received city support. Rules and regulations came along with the new status, but didn't seem to dampen festive spirit or style.

Students dressed in full fraternity or sorority regalia (colors, garb, and iconic brands) engaged in numerous impromptu step shows on Chamounix Drive. Inter-Greek competition was most common among the fraternal organizations. The Omegas shouted down the Alphas with impromptu raps and songs; instant approval or disapproval regarding competence rounded out each routine.

The African

American Greek letter system parallels but in few ways conforms to mainstream Panhellenic structure. Part of long-established African American Greek traditions of rushing and partying, the step show and other performance formats centering on song and dance closely resemble African-based performance styles.

Family reunions are popular summer events. Here, Coleridge Taylor holds great grand-daughter Brittany while Richard McIntosh displays a photograph of his grand-daughter for family members at the Chase-Dorsey-Taylor family reunion. PHOTO: JERRILYN MCGREGORY

As these descriptions indicate, there are many in the city who have vested interests in keeping traditions alive, and who rely on social rituals in the summer to come together with others who share those common interests. Working to document a cross-section of events in Philadelphia this summer, I found that with folk rituals, festivals, dramas, games and play, Philadelphians managed to beat the heat.

Jerrilyn McGregory

PHILADELPHIA FOLKLORE MONTH

→ *from page 5*

Library Company of Philadelphia: Possible program on folklore and photography.

Moore College of Art: Exhibition of the work of Bill Traylor, African American artist (1854-1947).

Mummers Museum: "A Century of Costumes, 1900-1989," an exhibition showing changes in the development of this Philadelphia folk art. Also "Making a Mummer," demonstrations of costume-making.

Mütter Museum: "Folk Medicine," an exhibition of folk medicinal apparatus and artifacts.

National Trust for Historic Preservation: Annual Meeting, with scholarly papers, tours, and other events.

Philadelphia
FOLKLORE
MONTH·OCTOBER'89

Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts: An exhibition of the traditional quilts of an African American woman and the contemporary jewelry of her daughter, exploring the influence of tradition on contemporary art.

Philadelphia Museum of Art: "Quilts from the Permanent Collections," an exhibition. Also a special issue of the Bulletin, including essays on the social contexts and aesthetics of quilts.

Please Touch Museum: "Happily Ever After: Folklore and Fairy Tales," an exhibition and related programs exploring a variety of cultural traditions of storytelling appropriate to young children.

Polish American Cultural Center: Polish American Heritage month programs.

Southeast Asian Mutual Assistance Association Coalition (and **New Liberty Productions**): Video documentation of festival and ritual traditions in the Southeast Asian communities, showings of videos at community sites, and possible performances of traditional dance and ritual.

Smithsonian Institution Office of Folklife: Possible booklet on Philadelphia African American folklife drawing on their local research and including the photographs of Roland Freeman.

Taller Puertorriqueño: Programs on Puerto Rican folklife traditions in Philadelphia, including a possible oral history project and a photo exhibit.

United American Indians of the Delaware Valley: Native American Fall Festival including traditional dance, craft, performances, displays, and contests.

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Philadelphia Folklore Project News

Folklore Workshops Scheduled

Workshops teaching how to document city folk traditions will be offered in November. Sessions will help you to identify a folklife project, conduct interviews, and process finished materials. Times: November 9, 16, and 22 (2:00-4:00) at the PFP office. The sessions are free, but places are limited. Call the office to reserve a place.

Public Folklore for College Credit

This fall, staff from the PFP and the Department of Folklore and Folklife at the University of Pennsylvania are cooperatively offering a Public Folklife Practicum. The practicum offers students a chance to work intensively with local arts, cultural, or community organizations developing and implementing folklife projects. Students are able to acquire or develop practical skills necessary for work with public programs or exhibitions, to explore theoretical issues regarding the representation of folklife, and to pursue in-depth research on a folklife topic. The practicum is intended to challenge students to combine theory and practice, to apply knowledge, and to translate academic language and concepts into publicly accessible terms. Students work in individually arranged placements with local organizations. This fall, Penn graduate student Carole Wood is taking advantage of the opportunity to work with the textile collections of the Atwater Kent Museum. For more information, contact Roger Abrahams at Penn or Debora Kodish at the PFP.

Hurrah for Volunteers

Over the last year, we've had considerable help from devoted and skilled volunteers. We want to thank: Claudia McBride for organizing our files of clippings on Philadelphia folklife, Linda Pitts for indexing our many volumes of field notes, Judy Richards for transcribing tapes, Steve Seminack for streamlining our accounting systems (and Community Accountants for finding us Steve). Special thanks to professional photographers Joe Solowiecjyk, Ed Seiz and Pat Armenia for donating their time and taking great pictures.

Works-in-progress
The Philadelphia Folklore Project
719 Catharine Street
Philadelphia, PA 19147

PHILADELPHIA FOLKLORE MONTH

→ *from page 7*

University Museum: "Symposium on Folk Drama and Ritual," including presentation of papers on world folk drama and ritual traditions. Also a performance of a Philadelphia folk dramatic tradition.

Other organizations developing programs, or considering various types of collaboration include: Africamericas Festival, American Poetry Center, Atwater Kent Museum, Cambodian Association of Greater Philadelphia, Community Women's Education Project, Thomas Eakins House, Germantown Historical Society, Grand Lodge Free and Accepted Masons, Hola Kumba Ya, Independence National Historical Park, Jewish Community Centers (David Neuman Senior Center, and Stiffel Center), Kalmyk Brotherhood Society of America, Lithuanian Folk Art Institute, Lutheran Settlement House Senior Center, Norris Square Civic Association, Northern Liberties Neighborhood Association, Ogontz Area Neighbors' Association, Painted Bride Arts Center, Philadelphia Department of Recreation, Philadelphia Green, Philadelphia Lebanese Folk Dancers, Philadelphia Theatre Caravan, Rélache, Temple University Center for Black History and Culture, Temple University Urban Archives, United Communities of Southeast Philadelphia, Samuel Yellin Metal Works.

For more detailed information, call us.

Works-in-progress
Newsletter of the Philadelphia Folklore Project

2:1 (Fall 1988)

Director	Debora Kodish
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Programs	Carole Boughter Betsy Lightbourn
Philadelphia Folklore Month/Guide	Joan Gross Jerrilyn McGregory
Family business project	Jim Abrams Hong Joon Kim Susan Levitas
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Works-in-progress

NEWSLETTER OF THE PHILADELPHIA [illegible] VOLUME 2 NUMBER 2 WINTER, 1989

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Heroes

and holidays fill this issue, the first for 1989. Whether you brought the new year in with black-eyed peas and greens or with mummery, or whether you will start your new year in the spring or fall, you probably depend upon special traditions for ending one year's round and beginning another. Holidays measure out our days, lending rhythm and meaning to the calendar. Heroes, standing for our values and dreams, give us another way to measure who we are and where we stand.

Eleanor Nelson tends the grill at Dwight's Southern Barbecue, a family-owned and operated restaurant and catering business with two locations in Philadelphia. PHOTO: STEPHANIE KANE

When we first met Eleanor Nelson and her family they told us about their Thanksgiving: how the Nelsons cook mouth-watering barbequed pork, usually a whole hog, for the family gathering. The tradition goes back from South Carolina to Africa. Down South, the family used to cook the hog in a pit in the ground. In Philadelphia it counts as a busman's holiday, since for fifty-one weeks a year, the Nelsons run Dwight's Southern Barbeque. On this holiday, the family traditions that gave rise to a business are savored by others who grew up in the tradition.

1988 was the first Thanksgiving without John Nelson, Eleanor's father, and the holiday was bittersweet. Traditions in which he had led the family and an art of cookery in which he was an acknowledged expert kept his memory near and his absence felt. Barbecuing the hog in the pit that he built, piecing together how he would have done it, recalling the many other times that the family had gone through the ritual, Eleanor and her mother, Rosanna, worked their way through a rearranged holiday.

The two women tended the fire in John Nelson's pit for nearly twelve hours, until one o'clock in the morning, waiting for the hog skin to look and feel done. Then, the entire hundred-pound hog was turned: a complicated maneuver if ever there was one. The evening was a time for recollection and visiting, as family members dropped by to help, to talk, and to check the progress of the slowly roasting pig. The holiday brought the Nelsons together, as John Nelson helped to do in his life.

Sometimes, we inherit and grow into knowledge of both heroes and holidays: as kids in Mummers' families take their first steps down the street. Other times, we imagine and shape traditions from our own present realities, as in Kwanzaa. This newsletter considers the importance of times and people that become larger than life, out-of-the-ordinary. Like the Nelson's Thanksgiving, or Cecil B. Moore, those holidays and heroes that matter connect us to the past and orient our future. We are grateful for your guidance in looking for such models.

Debora Kodish

A centennial program of The American Folklore Society, the **Philadelphia Folklore Project** conducts research and develops public programs on the city's folklife, past and present. For more information call (215) 238-0096.

"HOW TO DO WHAT CAN'T BE DONE:"
BOBBY PANDOLA'S MUMMERS' COSTUMES

The Victory Parade of the Fancy Brigades down Two Street on January 14 celebrated the hard work of Mummers and choreographers over the past year—work that entertained the larger city during the New Year's Shooter's Parade. Less obviously, it celebrated the work of a Philadelphia cottage industry: mummer's costume-making.

Bobby Pandola, who made about 300 headpieces this year, is recognized both informally in the mumming community and formally by the parade judges as an outstanding maker of costumes. In addition to working for his own club, the Oregon Fancies, he makes steel frames for about six brigades every year, mediating between the artist who designs a sketch and the paraders who have to carry the result. The job is not always easy.

After brigade members think of a theme, they hire a commercial artist or illustrator to design a costume sketch. This first stage of the process takes too long for Bobby's comfort: "The parade comes the same day every year. I mean, they act like it's a surprise! They constantly put it off, think they're going to have a better idea. And they keep saying, 'Wait one more week, I'm trying to work something else out.' And you have to literally go down there— it's like pulling teeth. 'Give me the sketch!'"

The abstract idea must become functional reality in Bobby's garage, and the combination of enthusiastic brigaders and non-mumming artist often hinders this goal. Frames drawn with parts floating in air, costumes drawn for a six-foot athlete which must fit a five-foot mummer, all must be brought down to earth. "They'd say, 'that ain't like the sketch.' I'd say, 'the sketch ain't like him'." Bobby considers how viewing from a distance will affect the finished product, and works on "impressionistic" effects with thick feathers. He figures out, through trial and error, "how to do what can't be done." He explains that "these are stage designs, really, one-man floats. You let your imagination run away with you. There's an end result you're looking for. In your head you know what you want, but it's how to reach it" that is the challenge.

Bobby's ability to realize the brigades' vision in effective form comes from many years' experience parading in the Fancy Division. He knows what the suits feel like, where the stresses are, how to adjust the design to balance and to move with the body. His expertise in solving these technical problems was acquired slowly, by observation, experiment, and "hanging around with the situation."

Recognized as an outstanding maker of mummers' costumes, headpieces and frames, Bobby Pandola deftly handles a welding torch.

PHOTOS ABOVE: PATENTED PHOTOS

This folk art context, where makers and users belong to the same community and work together, encourages the development of traditional solutions, such as the pattern templates Bobby makes for back and headpieces. By driving nails into a plywood base, he creates a raised outline to guide the steel as he shapes and cuts it. Although there is some danger of wood catching fire during welding, he prefers it to metal because of its greater malleability, which permits close and complex arrangement of nails.

Bobby's entry into the community of mumming occurred in childhood, through his father Armand, who began to participate in the parade in the 1950s. "Some of the earliest memories I have are of working with him— I spent many a night down the club with

In the Pandola family album (photo at right), the work of Bobby's father, Armand Pandola, is recorded for posterity.

him, learning." Armand was "one of the innovators" who began to change the look of the parade after the war, moving from the one-man suits emphasizing geometric shapes to the more fanciful floats with themes.

The transition has continued into Bobby's time, with lightweight frames on wheels. "Myself, I've carried some monsters up the street. But that was my dad's day. My father was into heavy steel and he was more worried about it breaking down than he was worried about you breaking down. Nowadays guys come to me and they're looking for the lightest thing possible. They're looking for movement, they're looking for dance steps."

Mumming

is a heavy commitment of time for the "five or six people that actually put the whole ball of wax together" in each club.

Bobby, like other mummers, has a job—body shop manager at Triboro Pontiac in Cinnaminson, New Jersey—and a family. Like his father, however, he has gotten his children involved with mummery. His daughter Christina, 13, marched this year for Oregon as a peacock, and Robert Jr., 5, won third prize juvenile as a butterfly.

The work, of course, is rewarded with prizes: the brigades Bobby worked for got third (Downtown), fifth (Strutters), and eighth (Satin Slippers, for a "novelty piece" he helped think up called "Pinball Wizards," in which each parader became part of a pinball machine— a flipper or a ball). The Oregon Captain's suit, to which he contributed, took first in the Fancies, and his Handsome Trim took second.

But the mummers who make the suits— Bobby and others— are seldom in it for the prizes, he says. "Would you stop working if you didn't get a trophy? No. I've seen these guys fight harder for things in Mummers than they do in their jobs." Ordinarily "sedate guys" get transformed when they start talking about Mummers. "Because that's totally them. That's one of the few things in their life that they can say, I thought it, I built it, I made it, I carried it, I did everything." For himself, Bobby adds, "I enjoy making it happen. When I design a costume, when it works, when it clicks and you can see it in these guys' faces, that's like winning first prize every time for me."

Dorothy Noyes and Jan Greenberg

PHOTO: COURTESY OF BOBBY PANDOLA

A MASTER LAWYER'S LEGEND:
CECIL B. MOORE IN THE PHILADELPHIA CRIMINAL COURTS

To learn to be effective, in an occupation such as trial law, is to learn from observation and practice. No treatises on advocacy or law school courses can prepare the novice for the tense, exhilarating experience of performing before a jury. The knowledge of how to deal with the unrelenting pressures of this situation comes in large measure through exposure to the styles and techniques of accomplished, seasoned practitioners. In any community of lawyers, there seems to be some who, as a result of success and reputation, become models, emulated by many. Once in a great while, one of these lawyers becomes a legend.

In Philadelphia, Cecil B. Moore has achieved this stature in the legal community. Although there are some members of the bar who would vehemently dispute it, many lawyers believe that he was the most impressive criminal attorney the city produced in the midpart of the century.

I remember well the first times I heard memories of Moore floating in the dusky air of Philadelphia's City Hall. I was observing preliminaries in a homicide case that pitted two of the city's best attorneys against each other: Roger King, who has more death penalties to his credit than any other prosecutor in Pennsylvania; and Robert Mozenter, a noted defense lawyer. Jury selection was slow. Both attorneys had time on their hands.

At one point I noticed Mozenter in animated conversation with the court clerk. Cecil Moore, he was saying to her, used to tell judges he needed a delay of trial so he could put an ad in the newspaper to get some witnesses. Then Mozenter told a pair of stories involving Moore and a judge, and went on to praise Moore's photographic memory. The clerk responded with her recollection of a time that Cecil Moore had taken fifteen minutes during closing argument to summarize the evolution of the law from ancient Europe to modern America. Afterwards, the judge had praised him, saying, "I've got nothing to add. You said it all."

Later, in the hallway outside the courtroom, I listened while Roger King and a homicide detective traded talk about Moore. The detective was maintaining that Moore was the best lawyer of them all. "Nobody did it better," King agreed, and proceeded to tell an anecdote about the time Moore was cross-examining a technician who swore he had dusted everything at the crime scene. Moore asked him, "Did you dust the bushes?"

Cecil Moore's power as a performer in the games of politics and law flowed from consummate control of a whole range of

Controversial yet beloved, Cecil B. Moore changed the overall te
trial practice with his dynamic courtroom style.

PHOTO: PHILADELPHIA EVENING BULLETIN/TEMPLE URBAN ARCHIVES

African American verbal art, from the roughest speaking practiced
street corners to the moralistic speaking of the church. He got the ni
name "preacher man," on account of his spellbinding sermonizing.
his oral style, like the role he played in society, looked toward the st
His aims, one might say, were more akin to a bluesman's than a
preacher's. He didn't condemn the sinner; he represented him. He tr
to induce juries to see through the defendant's eyes.

Cecil Moore was more than a dominating individual presence in the
criminal courts of Philadelphia. His performance style changed the
all tenor of trial practice. Attorneys who had the disposition for it co
aspects of what he did.

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The legendary stature of Cecil Moore demonstrates how a master trial lawyer is capable of infusing a vernacularly-derived style into the practice of an occupation in a way so powerful that it affects the outlook and conduct of a legal community. His reputation also demonstrates the importance which trial lawyers themselves attach to folk style in their work.

The fact that lawyers in Philadelphia celebrate the memory of Cecil Moore runs counter to the official images, promulgated by the legal profession, which eliminates lawyers' cultural backgrounds as a factor in their courtroom conduct. (This image isn't unique to law, of course; it is an assumption made about nearly every occupation in the United States.)

In deciding whether or not a story is true, jurors consider whether the person telling it deserves to be believed. The lawyer is not a synthetic American, but a man or woman with a particular background and history. Vernacular style roots this background and history in the life of the community. It supplies the lawyer with the resources of character and experience identified with a known group. Folk styles thrive in the courtroom because Americans depend upon vernacular performance to communicate authenticity.

Cecil Moore did not originate a style or set of strategies. Rather, like any trial lawyer, he had numerous models and examples to draw on, from his own life and from what he observed in the courts. His genius was his capacity to select, master, and integrate elements from the multiple sources of his experience in a way that armed him with everything he needed to deal boldly with each new situation. His significance to other lawyers lies in the image he holds out of what they themselves can do.

Samuel Schrager

(Former Philadelphian Sam Schrager is a folklorist, currently teaching on the faculty of Emerson College, in Washington. This is an excerpt from an essay of his that will appear in our **Guide to Philadelphia Folklife Resources** in 1989. Schrager's work on Moore is part of his larger study of the culture and verbal art of trial lawyers, to be published as a monograph by the Smithsonian.)

PHILADELPHIA FOLKLORE MONTH

The calendar for Philadelphia Folklore Month, planned for this October, is filling up. We're happy to announce the following new programs:

Cliveden of the National Trust: Family folklore programs will introduce ways of preserving family history, collecting family stories, and constructing a genealogy. A tour of Cliveden will be included. Also: Annual Reenactment of the October 4, 1777 Battle of Germantown. This annual event has become a tradition in its own right, a version of history played out by "reenactors" often steeped in knowledge of the era.

Community Education Center: Exhibition of folk arts of the Powelton-Mantua neighborhoods. The CEC hopes to document such activities as toolmaking, quilting, gardening, whirligig-making, local verbal arts and performance traditions. The aim of the project is to exhibit the range of creative activities that take place on a daily basis, and that form the fabric of the community of Powelton-Mantua.

Community Women's Education Project: The CWEP plans to collect stories and objects pertaining to the theme: "Back to School." The former schoolhouse that is the CWEP's home was the site of many memories for Kensington residents. (The project also hopes to gather personal accounts about school experiences from the women who currently attend classes at the CWEP.)

Friends of Black Oak Park: Weekend program where neighbors will share their diverse talents and traditions. Entertainment, crafts displays, and contests are all being considered.

JCC David Neuman Senior Center: Documentation of Sabbath celebrations as practiced in the Neuman Center and in the homes of members including storytelling, customs, song, ritual and oral history. Through their stories, artifacts, and Sabbath memorabilia, Center participants will share their rich experiences, and explain the personal significance of this centuries old tradition.

JCC Jacob and Esther Stiffel Senior Center: Enactment of the Shabbas tradition and accompanying musical and storytelling program at their center on Friday afternoon.

JCC Kaiserman Branch: Sukkot (a Jewish harvest festival dating from biblical times) will be celebrated. Festivities include dinner in Sukkah (arbor), music, dancing and storytelling.

Moore College of Art: In addition to the exhibition of works by Bill Traylor, African American artist (1854- 1947) already announced, Moore plans an exhibition of collections by local residents. Collections might include: trophies, string, buttons, cards, utensils.

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THE LIFE AND TIMES OF A PUPPETEER

Memories

and occasional printed references remind us that for years Philadelphia has been home to talented puppeteers, masters of an ancient and varied folk art form. "Punch and Judy" shows were presented in the city as early as 1742, and Joseph Curreri maintained a Sicilian marionette theater in South Philadelphia around the turn of this century. Several puppeteers still work privately in the city, and a permanent, regularly performing marionette theater is located in the Playhouse in Fairmount Park.

Drawing upon fine craftsmanship, drama, and verbal tricks, folk puppetry was considered adult entertainment in America until recently. In many other cultures, it still is— and huge crowds gather to view epic dramas performed by puppets.

Puppets are found all over the world. A common way of distinguishing one puppet tradition from another is according to how these figures are manipulated. For instance, most of the puppets that kids play with at home are glove puppets. String marionettes are also likely to be familiar to us. Rod puppets are manipulated by means of stiff rods, either from above (as in the Italian, Northern French and Belgian traditions) or from below (as with some of Jim Henson's Muppets). Shadow puppets (major traditions in China, Indonesia and Turkey) are flat and shown from behind a screen.

Hal Taylor, the artistic director of the Philadelphia Marionette Theater and Museum, has been working with puppets since he was a child. Hal was born in Providence, Rhode Island in 1919. His half-Narragansett grandmother encouraged his childhood interest in drawing and modeling figures from clay, and his French Canadian grandfather taught him how to use tools. He began making puppets in junior high school in Norristown, and was called "the marionette man" by the time he graduated from high school. As a teenager, he performed at church functions, YMCAs, and family reunions around town. His interest in carving puppets inspired his choice of cabinetry as a profession. Cabinetry supported his passion for puppetry through times when it couldn't support itself.

By the 1940s, Hal was well read on the subject of puppetry and had attended every available puppet show. He used and owned many puppets himself: from cloth glove puppets to paper mache and, finally, carved wooden marionettes.

Hal went overseas during World War II, and continued his education as a puppeteer. His performances with the ventriloquist dummy were so popular that he was recruited by Special Services to entertain the troops around Europe. Also during the war, Hal began carving a set of thirty-two inch string marionettes.

Norristown-born Hal Taylor carved the three puppets shown here in a Philadelphia Marionette Theater performance.

PHOTO: ROBERT NARONI, COURTESY OF PHILADELPHIA MARIONETTE THEATER

For four years he traveled with the military show, doing parodies of popular songs and skits with his dummy. He came back to Philadelphia in 1949, working both at cabinetry and as a teacher of industrial arts in elementary and junior high schools. Hal didn't have much time to set up an elaborate string marionette show with a large stage and scenes, but he continued performing Punch and Judy since he could quickly fold up the stage and fit it in the back of his car.

In the 1960s the world-famous Piccoli Marionette Theater came to Philadelphia and Hal became good friends with them. With their encouragement, he began putting more effort into presenting shows. He performed at street fairs and, for awhile, had a puppet theater on the Boardwalk in Wildwood. In 1978, Cathy Brownholtz teamed up with him and they began working toward his lifelong dream of opening a permanent marionette theater and museum dedicated to educating Philadelphians about puppetry: a dramatic art form with roots in folk cultures all around the world. Thousands of puppetry items, gathered by Taylor and Brownholtz over the years, are now packed away in boxes. During Philadelphia Folklore Month in October of 1989, the Philadelphia Marionette Theater plans to open an exhibit on folk puppetry at the Playhouse in the Park. Hal and Cathy will entertain and (in the most traditional of manners) perhaps shock the crowd with an uproarious Punch and Judy show.

Joan Gross

Philadelphia
FOLKLORE
MONTH·OCTOBER '89

PHILADELPHIA FOLKLORE MONTH

→ *from page 5*

Mummers Museum: In addition to the exhibition ("A Century of Costumes"), and demonstrations announced in previous issues, the Mummers Museum will offer a "Mini- Mummers Parade" for kids. After a tour of the Museum, children will be able to assemble masks, wear costumes, play instruments, and create their own parade.

National Archives-Philadelphia Branch: Photograph and documentary exhibition on WPA folklore studies and photographs. Included will be photographs of Philadelphia textile mills taken by Lewis Hine (to be exhibited for the first time in America), and documents regarding the interviews done by WPA workers with people from different ethnic neighborhoods.

The Pennsylvania School for the Deaf: The folk traditions of the Philadelphia Deaf community will be showcased in a day of American Sign Language public programs including: round-robin storytelling, games, characterizations, jokes, finger plays, and other traditions.

Philadelphia Marionette Theater and Museum: Traditional Punch and Judy show, exhibition of international folk puppets, and lecture on folk puppetry.

University of Pennsylvania-Arthur Ross Gallery: "Victorientalia": an exhibition of Oriental rugs and carpets. Examples of near Eastern folk weavings that appealed to Victorian sensibilities, from Philadelphia collections.

Samuel Yellin Metalworkers: Tour of shop and gallery, demonstrations by working craftsmen, exhibition of a wide range of fine artifacts made in the Yellin shop over the years.

Philadelphia Folklore Project News

Grants workshop for organizations $$$$$

Need to know more about funding for folk arts? Interested in applying to the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts this April? Want to know about opportunities for apprenticeships in traditional arts? These subjects will be discussed in a special program sponsored by the Philadelphia Folklore Project on February 23, 1989, 9:00-4:30, here at the Fleisher Art Memorial, 719 Catharine St.

David Stephens, Program Officer from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts and Amy Skillman, Director of State Folklife Programs from the Pennsylvania Heritage Affairs Commission, will present an overview of funding areas in the morning. The afternoon will be devoted to individual scheduled consultations with Stephens, Skillman, and PFP staff. The morning sessions are open to all. Afternoon appointments wil be made by reservation. For more information, and to schedule a consultation, call the PFP (238-0096) by February 17.

Holiday "thank you" gathering

Dorothy Marcucci's delectable traditional Italian cakes, folk concert tickets from International House's Folklife Center and the Painted Bride, "Craft and Community" exhibit catalogs from the Balch, Philadelphia Folklore Month t-shirts, and an evening of documentation by PFP staff were among the door prizes won at the PFP end-of-the year "thank you" gathering. Nearly 100 people ate their way through great trays of Dwight's Southern barbeque, thanks to Eleanor Nelson. A photo display and slide show drawn from the PFP archives drew crowds: people gathered around, comparing the traditions of the city—their own and others. We planned the occasion to honor and thank those most involved in plans for our upcoming Italian exhibition, family business project, and Philadelphia Folklore Month. Special thanks for their help to Garrison Printing Company, Dorothy Marcucci, Eleanor Nelson, Chris Hayes, Tom McCabe, Catherine Jacobs, Gail Stern, and the staffs of the Fleisher and the PFP.

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Works-in-progress
The Philadelphia Folklore Project
719 Catharine Street
Philadelphia, PA 19147

PHILADELPHIA FOLKLORE MONTH

→ *from page 7*

Grants received

We are happy to acknowledge the generous support of the Pew Charitable Trusts, the William Penn Foundation, Provident National Bank, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Pennsylvania Humanities Council, the American Association for State and Local History, and the Pennsylvania Museums and Historical Commission.

PFP T-shirts for sale

A limited number of attractive t-shirts with the Philadelphia Folklore Month logo are available. 100% cotton. Medium and Small sizes only. $10.00

Working papers about Philadelphia Folklore

1. "The Satisfactions of Reproduction: A Baroque Painter in Italian Philadelphia." Dorothy Noyes. $2.00
2. "There are Other Ways to Get Happy:" African American Urban Folklore." Jerrilyn McGregory. $2.00
3. "It's Just Like Being at Home": The Structure and Style of Folklore in Philadelphia's Family Businesses." James Abrams. $2.00

Works-in-progress
Newsletter of the Philadelphia Folklore Project

2:2 (Winter 1989)

Director	Debora Kodish
Archive/media	Jan Greenberg
Publicist/folklorist	Carole Boughter
Philadelphia Folklore Month/Guide	Joan Gross Jerrilyn McGregory
Family business project	Jim Abrams Hong Joon Kim Susan Levitas
Italian crafts project	Dorothy Noyes
Secretary	Lyndia Johnson

The Philadelphia Folklore Project
719 Catharine Street
Philadelphia, PA 19147
(215) 238-0096

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Works-in-progress

NEWSLETTER OF THE PHILADELPHIA FOLKLORE PROJECT VOLUME 2 NUMBER 3 SUMMER 1989

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Marks on a map may outline city neighborhoods, but the limits of our communities are harder to define. What makes a community and keeps it strong? We invite you to read about the four Philadelphia folk traditions described in this season's newsletter: an ironworkers' ritual, Puerto Rican décimas about immigration, the practices of urban gardeners, and the art of tap dance. Each of these folk arts has roots in peoples' own experiences. Each preserves links to the past and brings people together. At the Philadelphia Folklore Project, we believe that these and other folk traditions help to create communities.

Bell Atlantic
Philadelphia, You're

Bobby Turner sends up the beam at the "official" topping out ceremony for the Bell Atlantic Tower.

PHOTO: PATENTED PHOTOS

Folk traditions give us ways to mend communities, too. This spring, people came together over thread and fabric, stitching their memories into a cloth memorial through the AIDS Quilt project. These days, more and more neighbors are joining together in marches to name and shame drug dealers. (Folklorists call such demonstrations "charivaris:" the tradition of humiliating wrong-doers with noise and mockery dates at least to the sixteenth century).

People will be coming together this October, sharing some of the traditions that encourage and sustain communities as part of Philadelphia Folklore Month. All over the city, arts, cultural, and neighborhood groups will be opening their doors, inviting you to learn more about arts that are part of their lives. Philadelphia Folklore Month offers a rare opportunity to get to know your neighbor, and to share something of yourself. Look for a calendar describing the full range of programs: it will arrive in your mailbox sometime in September. Or, give us a call to get your copy.

Philadelphia Folklore Month is just one of the programs we've developed to support, document, and preserve the city's vital folk arts. Regular readers of this newsletter know about our resource guide, publications programs, technical assistance and consultation services, workshops, research, and exhibitions. For the first time, we've included a membership form in this issue. We invite you to join us—and to join with many others who believe in the folk traditions that enrich and enliven our communities.

Debora Kodish

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The **Philadelphia Folklore Project** conducts research and develops public programs on the city's folklife, past and present. For more information call (215) 238-0096.

TOPPING OUT:
"THE TREE SYMBOLIZES THAT WE DID IT!"

Giant

skyscrapers go up in Center City— built by armies of ironworkers, masons, plumbers, steamfitters, glaziers, and carpenters. Using the most modern of techniques and equipment, these skilled construction workers also rely upon traditional practices— as we all do in our work. Job manuals don't describe the subtleties that we learn from fellow workers. Official rules don't convey inherited wisdom about how to do a job well. Folk traditions do these things.

Important traditions are shaped and shared by workers themselves: a good example is the "topping out" ceremony done when ironworkers swing a great building's final beam into place. An evergreen tree and an American flag are attached to that last piece of iron. Workers may sign their names on the beam itself before it is hoisted up. A rip-roaring party often follows. Ironworkers aren't the only ones to mark a building's completion with a ceremony: such customs are many centuries old. Eighth-century Scandinavians and Germans placed evergreen trees atop the ridgepole in newly finished houses. Nineteenth-century New Englanders christened the top beam with rum and made up rhymes about the owner of the new construction, jokingly putting down the very person whose house they had just helped to put up. Working together in an intense effort, house-builders develop traditions to mark the moment of their success.

When the fifty-three story Bell Atlantic Tower was topped out, more than fifty ironworkers came down from the building's heights to sign their names on the last beam. There was joking and teasing, a lot of horseplay, a bottle of champagne, and a great cheer as Bobby Turner sent the big beam up— raising the names of hundreds of workers up to the top with it. Ironworkers left their stamp on the building, marking it their own creation.

Traditions

change over time, but they continue to remind us about what matters— what counts as important, risky, or significant. Building huge modern towers is difficult, dangerous work. Ironworkers today sometimes work as high as seven hundred feet above ground in bitter cold and scorching heat. It took about sixteen months to complete the frame of the Bell Atlantic Tower. Work continues at the site, but after raising the symbolic last beam in their topping out ceremony, ironworkers had finished their part of the job. They would go on to other jobs if they could find them.

Bell Atlantic
Philadelphia You're The Tops

Workers nearing the completion of the Bell Atlantic Tower stop to watch the official topping out—with flag, tree and painted beam. PHOTO: PATENTED PHOTOS

What does topping out mean? Ironworker Neil McCrossen said: "To us around here, the tree symbolizes that we did it." Old-time ironworkers debate the subject. Some say that a tree is raised only if there has been no loss of life on the job. Others say that the tree goes up regardless, but only on big jobs. On some jobs, the ironworkers' Local banner goes up. Every topping out is different.

Topping

out is an old custom, but it continues in Philadelphia today because it does something that "feels right" to ironworkers. It gives them a way to mark an ending, to celebrate their accomplishment, and to take credit for a building that will forevermore, in its frame and on a beam that will soon be hidden, proudly wear their names. With this ceremony, they "sign off" the building: it is theirs no longer. But the ironworkers are not the only ones to find meaning and worth in time-worn folk traditions.

Members of ironworkers' Local 401 prepare to raise the beam.
PHOTO: PATENTED PHOTOS

Frank Lane and Barry Newcombe pen their signatures on the beam. PHOTO: DEBORA KODISH

A second ceremony, "in the tradition of the steelworkers topping out," went on at the Bell Atlantic Tower, a few weeks later. On February 22, with balloons, band music, and fanfare, a freshly painted white beam reading "Bell Atlantic: Philadelphia, You're The Tops" was ceremoniously autographed by Mayor Goode, Raymond Smith (president of Bell Atlantic), and other politicians. Most of the people who worked at Bell walked over during the morning to sign their names, too. With a tree and an American flag, the beam was pulled to the sky.

For a time, the two beams could be seen on the eastern and western tops of the building. Two flags flew in the wind; two trees stood dwarfed by the height. One tradition for making many statements about a building and those who put it up.

What about your workplace? Let us know about the rituals and traditions that are part of your work. We look forward to hearing from you.

Debora Kodish

FAR FROM PUERTO RICO :
DECIMAS ABOUT THE IMMIGRANT EXPERIENCE

Immigration takes migrants away from usual patterns of living and forces them to perform in brand new environments. All immigrants to Philadelphia have this much in common. Their particular migratory experiences do not mirror each other, however. Puerto Rico's historical and contemporary relationship with the United States creates a particularly confusing atmosphere. For instance, Puerto Ricans are citizens but have restricted voting privileges. They also speak what the majority of Americans consider a foreign language. They come here to find work while North American corporations go to Puerto Rico to escape taxes. In addition, Puerto Rican migrants move frequently back and forth between the two regions. The first Puerto Ricans migrated to Philadelphia in 1943. Today Philadelphia's *barrio* (which means neighborhood in Spanish) is well established.

Because folklore is alive and rooted in the community, it speaks about events which are important to contemporary lives. Sometimes the words are clouded in metaphor and other times they are quite direct. It should not come as a surprise, then, that immigration and problems arising from immigration are important topics in Puerto Rican folklore.

Music, singing and dance are particularly rich areas of folklore in the Puerto Rican community. African, Native American, and Spanish elements blend together to create a distinct and wonderful sound. At the Norris Square Senior Center, gatherings come alive with traditional singing styles learned in the countryside of Puerto Rico and transported to Philadelphia. One of these styles is the *décima*. Décima refers either to the ten line stanza or to the song made of several of these stanzas. In the most popular rhyme scheme for these stanzas the first, fourth and fifth lines rhyme with each other; the second and third lines rhyme; the sixth, seventh and tenth lines rhyme and the eighth and ninth lines rhyme producing a rhyme scheme of ABBAACCDDC. This rhyme scheme was first used in sixteenth-century Spain, but the rhythms to which it is sung in Puerto Rico show the influence of Africa and of the native island population.

Décimas about love, religion, politics and adventure have been sung for centuries in Puerto Rico. Becoming an immigrant certainly ranks among the greatest of adventures and so it is a popular décima topic among the Puerto Ricans of Philadelphia. Here are the first verses of two décimas sung by Rafaela Collazo of Humacao, Puerto Rico at one of the fiestas at Norris Square Senior Center.

LEJOS DE PUERTO RICO

Dejé a mi patria querida
por venir a Nueva York.
Ahora comprendo con honor
que aquello nunca se olvida.
Eres patria bendecida
y te añoro sin desdén.
Eres cual hermoso Edén
que no se debe dejar.
Esto me pongo a pensar
no te cambio Borinquén.

UN JIBARO
EN NUEVA YORK

Me refiero a los Hispanos
que llegan a Nueva York
y al apearse del vapor
se le olvida el Castellano.
Ayer me encontré a Mariano,
Un jíbaro del Jagüey,
y al montarse en el subway
le pregunté como estaba
y lo que me contestaba
era "I don't know what you say."

Both songs concern the different attitudes immigrants adopt toward their country of origin. Some people are characterized as remaining "homesick" while others are all too eager to forget where they came from. "Far From Puerto Rico" describes the immense nostalgia for the homeland. As this song was sung, tears filled the eyes of many members of the audience. In contrast, they shook with laughter as "A Country Bumpkin in New York," was sung. The culmination of every ten line verse with a phrase in English is seen as particularly amusing, since it takes special skills to rhyme English words with Spanish ones.

* For many Philadelphia Puerto Ricans, New

SAN JUAN, PR 009
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1988

FAR FROM PUERTO RICO

I left my beloved country
to come to New York. *
Now, I honestly understand
that I can never forget her.
You are a blessed country
and I long for you without disdain.
You are such a beautiful Eden
that should not be left.
This sets me thinking
I won't exchange you, Puerto Rico.

ork was their first introduction to the United States.

A COUNTRY BUMPKIN IN NEW YORK

I'm referring to Spanish people
who arrive in New York
and stepping out of the steamer
forget the Spanish language.
Yesterday I met Mariano,
a country bumpkin from Jaguey,
and getting on the subway
I asked him how he was doing
and what he answered me
was "I don't know what you say."

It also points to a central problem in the Puerto Rican community—that of language maintenance as oppposed to language loss and the complex feelings surrounding levels of Spanish/English bilingualism. This song takes a critical position toward immigrants who pretend to forget Spanish (and, therefore, the homeland) and makes them the cause for laughter.

Verbal art which focuses on leaving the homeland and adopting a stance toward a new language and culture (sometimes creatively interweaving the native and the learned language) validates the lived experience of the migrants who come here and helps create a sense of community in a new setting.

Joan Gross

PHILADELPHIA FOLKLORE MONTH

Three years in the making, Philadelphia Folklore Month is this October. We look forward to welcoming one and all to exhibitions, programs and special events around the city featuring inside views of the traditions and arts that enliven our lives. Newly announced programs include the following:

Africamericas Festival: Music and dance from the African diaspora.

American Swedish Historical Museum: Swedish Folk Arts Festival, celebrating and demonstrating Swedish folk traditions in crafts, music, and dance. Also featuring demonstrations of Swedish bread- and pastry-making.

American Women's Heritage Society with the **Philadelphia Doll Museum:** Exhibition of Barbara Whiteman's Black folk dolls with a slide show and discussion on traditional doll making.

Andorra Day Natural Area in Fairmount Park: Andorra Day Fall Festival which includes some traditional Fall rural activities—cider pressing, pumpkin decorating, bobbing, herb "dream pillows." Also Unspooky Night—a walk for families with scary things unspooked and a story by campfire.

Balch Institute for Ethnic Studies: "Traditions in Transition: Jewish Culture in Philadelphia 1840-1940," an exhibition exploring one hundred years of Jewish life and culture in Philadelphia, including attention to family traditions, customs, occupational practices, Yiddish culture, and the landsmanschaften (or hometown clubs) that immigrant Jews created by and for themselves.

Cambodian Association of Greater Philadelphia: Kathin festival including the blessing of traditional Cambodian food and a community feast.

Thomas Eakins House: A neighborhood folk festival featuring the various music, dance, crafts and foods of the different communities represented in the Spring Garden area.

Grand Lodge Free and Accepted Masons: A folklore guide to the masonic paraphernalia on exhibit will be prepared.

Hola Kumba Ya: Performances by storytellers.

Ile Baba Mi Cultural Center: Annual African Egun-gun Masquerade Halloween Party.

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ROOTS AND BRANCHES:
THE GREENING OF URBAN PHILADELPHIA

Philadelphia has more urban gardens than any place else in the United States, due to the efforts of the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's Philadelphia Green Program and Penn State University's Urban Gardening Program. Gardeners who reside here have responded overwhelmingly to the appeal of these two programs. Traditional gardeners find a support system willing to aid them in the reinterpretation of their past experiences within the context of urban agriculture and horticulture. Philadelphia Green and the Urban Gardening Program demonstrate that the most effective urban programs should build on the lived experiences of those they wish to assist.

Philadelphia Green has designated the Norris Square neighborhood as the site for its next Greene Countrie Towne. The impetus for this greening concern evolves from William Penn's dictum that "care be taken to leave one acre of trees for every five acres cleared." The designation means that more opportunities will exist for community gardeners like Arturo Villot, Juan Santiago, and Tomasita Romero to grow traditional crop items and flowers which are meaningful to them as they beautify their neighborhood. This effort should go a long way toward instilling pride for all neighborhood residents, most of whom immigrated from Puerto Rico.

However, Marina and Adariano LaPina from the Phillipines typify community gardeners in this area. The LaPinas grow many items essential to the preparation of food dishes from their native land. Squashes more than a yard long grow from their arbor. The arbor serves as a vital growing area for a precious cargo of heavy vine-growing vegetables like the *opa* (squash) and *esponja* (luffa) whose vines are free to lace through the lattices of the fenced-in grove. By fall, the LaPinas will have to place many in slings to prevent them from tumbling off the vine by their sheer weight. Additionally, they grow bok choy, yard-long beans (best at half a yard), radicchio, and Filipino eggplant. The luffa they grow are quite edible when harvested at the right time. They are generally considered inedible and used chiefly as a coarse sponge.

Mr. and Mrs. LaPina annually travel back to the Phillipines, always returning with more seeds to fulfill their culinary needs. They grow a perennial onion whose genus is unknown since it just "followed them home from their vacation." This variety of onion has since followed others home from the LaPinas and these gardeners find other uses for this type of onion within their own cooking traditions. (The LaPinas pickle the onion, but those who take home growths usually do not borrow the recipe).

Many gardeners honor the new friends they acquired in urban gardening through such cross-cultural exchanges of plants, and by setting aside special areas to cultivate these plants. Willie Mae Bullock is one such gardener from South Carolina who has created a separate garden for these gifts. Blanche Epps, a master traditional gardener also from South Carolina, informs me that gardeners feel delighted when plants that cannot be recognized by their indigenous names are recognized by their appearances like the Hispanic *name* (yam) and *grandules* (pigeon pea). How people name and cook foods may differ, but through gardening they gain a sense of a shared heritage that helps to bridge notions about cultural differences.

Not far from Philadelphia's first Greene Countrie Towne in West Hagert, Glenwood Avenue Greenacres in North Philadelphia could represent a "Towne" by itself. With 98 community gardeners at this one convenient site along the railroad tracks, Glenwood is a wonder to behold. James Taylor, its talented coordinator and a retired cook from North Carolina, has irrigated the site with a complex water system, laid brick walkways, and constructed a durable stucco shed to store his equipment. Just as a rowhouse in Philadelphia often features some elaboration to distinguish it from the next, most gardeners at this three-acre site offer some ingenious measure to demarcate their space. The backs of lawnchairs are used for borders, and creative trellis designs, whirligigs, and scarecrows abound. Membership in gardening sites such as this connects people to their roots while at the same time reaffirming their sense of community.

Marina LaPina in her Philadelphia arbor.

PHOTO: JERRILYN MCGREGORY

Jerrilyn McGregory

"GOING TO WORK:"
FIFTY YEARS OF TAP DANCING IN CONCERT HALLS OF PHILADELPHIA

LaVaughn Robinson, still tapping after all these years.

PHOTO: PATENTED PHOTOS

LaVaughn

Robinson's dance career began on a linoleum floor in the shed kitchen of the family's South Philadelphia row home. His mother "hitched her skirt just above her knees" to teach him his first time-step. From age seven on, he continued to learn steps from most of the region's talented tap dancers. Teddy Hale and Bill Bailey (Pearl Bailey's brother) are mentors that LaVaughn readily acknowledges. At age 62, LaVaughn Robinson truly is a master of styles passed down from a long line of tap dancers before him.

"You could walk down South Street," LaVaughn recalls, "and meet up with the best dancers in the city. As a youngster I put my steps to good use performing for change on the streets of downtown and South Philadelphia." Either he danced "a cappella" (without instrumental accompaniment) or he'd find a washboard or tin tub accompanist to lay down some rhythms. Whenever Bill Bailey was in town performing at the Latin Casino (a nightclub that used to be on Walnut near Broad St.), he would bring LaVaughn and the other kid tap dancers inside and let them watch his show. LaVaughn says: "We used to sit in his dressing room while he talked to us about being 'good.' His father was a reverend, you know, and Bill thought tap dancing was very spiritual. He believed you had to be 'right' to dance. He was a big influence on my dancing."

From "buskin'"

(entertaining by singing or dancing on the streets for money), LaVaughn and other dancers could earn thirty-five to forty dollars on a weekend evening. South Street was a thriving business district in the 1930s and 40s, and people enjoyed the novelty of watching young men exhibit new steps. LaVaughn and the friends he danced with knew their market. Center City and South Street were their "turf." "We used to call it 'going to work,'" LaVaughn noted. "During New Year's, the Army-Navy game, and holidays, Philadelphia tap dancers were invited up to rooftops to dance for parties. I had my regular club route which included spots like Palumbo's and the Two Bit Club.

LaVaughn was featured in his first professional performance in 1945. Over the years, he has shared the stage with Cab Calloway, Tommy Dorsey and his Orchestra, Maynard Ferguson, Ella Fitzgerald, Billie Holiday, Charlie Parker, and others. LaVaughn actively pursued his dance career through 1972. By then, most of the nightclubs which kept tap dancers employed were going out of business as highly electrified music became more popular.

I first met LaVaughn in 1981, when he matched note for tap with another great (but no longer living) Philadelphia artist, Horace "Spoons" Williams, during a family program sponsored by International House's Folklife Center in West Philadelphia. Contemporary dance and folk audiences were by then discovering and appreciating LaVaughn's artistry. In performance, he exhibits exuberance and an uncanny ability to convince every audience member that they have had an intimate "conversation" with this well-heeled gentleman.

He is also an exceptional teacher. His dance partner, Germaine Ingram (a practicing lawyer and PFP Board member, too), says that to LaVaughn, "no phrase is a mere exercise or time-keeper; no pattern dissolves in a muddle of rhythmic complexity. Every phrase has a distinct message and a determined role within a larger musical story. He is one of a very few dancers who can truly represent for today's audiences and students the

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LaVaughn

→ *from page 7*

conversational affinity with rhythm which derives from learning, creating, and honing one's art in a milieu where swing and bop were official dialects."

LaVaughn offers classes to scores of students four days a week during the school year at Philadelphia's University of the Performing Arts. In 1986 and 1987, he was honored with two Pennsylvania Council on the Arts grants to teach tap to two students. Recently, he was awarded a prestigious National Heritage Fellowship Award. Offered annually to one dozen master artists, these awards are sponsored by the Folk Arts Program of the National Endowment for the Arts.

LaVaughn will offer a personal history of tap in Philadelphia, and join Board member Germaine Ingram in an informal afternoon of conversation and tap demonstrations at the Philadelphia Folklore Project's September 10th "Potlucks and Performances" program scheduled at the Fleisher Art Memorial, 719 Catherine St. This event is free with a covered dish to PFP members. Non-members are asked to contribute $5.00 and a covered dish. Call (215) 238-0096 for details. Don't miss this special afternoon.

Carole Boughter

PHILADELPHIA FOLKLORE PROJECT

BECOME A MEMBER

Membership in the Philadelphia Folklore Project supports a wide range of activities— from newsletters to technical assistance programs. Members receive discounts on publications and reduced or free admission to PFP events. Join today!

$10	**Student/ fixed income**. Receive a year's subscription to "Works-in-progress," the newsletter of the Philadelphia Folklore Project.
$25	**Friend**. Receive the newsletter and free or reduced admission to PFP events.
$50	**Supporting Friend**. Receive all of the above, and a PFP T-shirt.
$150	**Patron**. Receive all of the above and a free PFP publication (**Uses of Tradition: Arts of Italian Americans in Philadelphia**, or the program book for Philadelphia Folklore Month).

Additional contributions to the Project are invited. We thank you!

Philadelphia
FOLKLORE
P·R·O·J·E·C·T

Name ____________________ Address ____________________

City/State/Zip ____________________ Phone ____________________

T-shirt size (for Supporting and Patron memberships only): **S M L XL**

☐ $10 Student/ fixed income

☐ $25 Friend
($5 tax-deductible)

☐ $50 Supporting friend
($15 tax deductible)

☐ $150 Patron
($90 tax deductible)

☐ In addition, I enclose $____________ as a donation to the Philadelphia Folklore Project. (Tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law).

Mail to: **Philadelphia Folklore Project, 719 Catharine Street, Philadelphia, PA 19147 (215) 238-0096**

PHILADELPHIA FOLKLORE MONTH

→ *from page 5*

Independence National Historical Park (Old City Hall): "Liberty Bell Memorabilia," an exhibition celebrating the legends, history and memorabilia of the Liberty Bell.

International House Folklife Center: "Made to Last: Craft Traditions in the Delaware Valley," an exhibition exploring regional folk, professional, and industrial crafts, showing the cultural heritage, individual artistry, and legacy of knowledge and experience that lie behind objects of wood, stone and fabric.

Lithuanian Folk Art Institute: Exhibition of traditional Lithuanian folk arts, including hand-woven sashes, tapestries, dolls, costumes, amber jewelry, wood-carvings and much more.Also concerts of Lithuanian folk music and sale of Lithuanian food and crafts.

Norris Square Senior Citizens Center: A festival showcasing the many talents of the Center participants, including the singing of decimas, plenas and bombas.

Painted Bride Art Center: Showcase concert with nominees of the Best-in-Folk Music category of the Philadelphia Music Foundation Awards, traditional South Indian violin music, and a jazz program. Also a photographic exhibition of local folk musicians and events sponsored by the Philadelphia Folk Song Society.

Pennsylvania School for the Deaf: "The Life and Times of the Deaf in Philadelphia," an exhibition on changes within the deaf community. As well, an evening of deaf folklore featuring stories, anecdotes, and jokes in American Sign Language. The program will be interpreted into voice for the hearing members of the audience.

Pennsylvania State Urban Gardening Program: 10th National Conference of the American Community Gardening Association. Tours of neighborhood gardens reflecting a wide variety of ethnic traditions.

Philadelphia Clef Club of Performing Arts: Sunday jam sessions at the oldest African American musicians' union in the country. Bring your own instruments to play.

Philadelphia Fire Department: Open houses at fire stations around the city and a city-wide sounding of sirens as part of "Fire Prevention Week" an observance commemorating the 108th anniversary of the Great Chicago Fire.

Portuguese American Rosary Society: Portuguese Folk Festival featuring traditional dances by Rashno Tamar Alto.

PSFS Meritor: "Creating a Tradition of Thrift: School Banking in Philadelphia," an exhibition which traces PSFS' school banking program from its beginning in 1923 to its end in 1981. Especially of interest are the folklore-derived sayings, songs, dances, and plays about thrift used in their educational program.

St. Michael's Russian Orthodox Church: 13th Russian Festival featuring traditional foods, music and dancing.

Temple University—Charles Blockson Afro American Collection: "The Griot to the Signifying Monkey," an exhibition of African American oral traditions in print.

Philadelphia Folklore Project News

Grant workshops a success.

Over forty people turned out for our winter grants workshop with staff from the Pennsylvania Heritage Affairs Commission and Pennsylvania Council on the Arts. State folklorist Amy Skillman and PCA program officers David Stephens and Bill Daniels fielded questions and informed participants about funding opportunities, especially for folk arts. A spring grants roundtable brought community arts programmers together with Sara Moran of Provident National Bank and Doug Bauer of Scott Paper Company Foundation. Sara and Doug explained the mysteries of corporate and bank funding in an informal and lively session. Thanks to all participants.

Folklore in the news.

The *Philadelphia Inquirer* and the *Philadelphia Daily News* followed PFP staff suggestions, describing the intricate art of palm weaving in recent articles. Newspaper coverage generated interest from local palm-weavers and people wanting to purchase palms.

Congratulations to PFP staff.

Joan Gross has accepted a teaching position at Oregon State University for this fall. Jerrilyn McGregory will be a Minority Scholar-in-Residence at Franklin and Marshall College, also beginning this fall. We'll miss you!

We are happy to introduce the PFP's Board of Directors for 1989/90.

They are: Roger Abrahams (Professor and Graduate Chairman at the University of Pennsylvania's Department of Folklore and Folklife), Blanche Epps (community gardener and expert in traditional agriculture, foodways, and folklife), Germaine Ingram (lawyer and tap dancer),

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Works-in-progress
Newsletter of the Philadelphia Folklore Project

The Philadelphia Folklore Project
719 Catharine Street
Philadelphia, PA 19147

Philadelphia Folklore Project News

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Thora Jacobson (director of the Fleisher Art Memorial), Jack Lindsey (Assistant Curator of American Art at the Philadelphia Museum of Art), Cheryl McClenney-Brooker (Vice President-External at the Philadelphia Museum of Art), John Roberts (Associate Professor of Folklore and director of African American Studies at the University of Pennsylvania).

Our thanks for generous support

Thanks to The Pew Charitable Trusts, The William Penn Foundation, the American Association for State and Local History, the National Endowment for the Humanities, Pennsylvania Humanities Council, Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, Pennsylvania Museums and Historical Commission, Philadelphia National Bank, Provident National Bank, and the Scott Paper Company Foundation.

Works-in-progress
Newsletter of the Philadelphia Folklore Project

2:3 (Summer 1989)

Director	Debora Kodish
Archive/media	Jan Greenberg
Publicist/folklorist	Carole Boughter
Philadelphia Folklore Month/Guide	Joan Gross Jerrilyn McGregory
Italian crafts project	Dorothy Noyes
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Works-in-progress

NEWSLETTER OF THE PHILADELPHIA [redacted] VOLUME 3 NUMBER 1 WINTER 1989/90

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Radio

talk shows, letters to the editor, and dinner table conversations provide a steady stream of Philadelphia horror stories. Tales about thefts, vandalism, and automobile break-ins are all traded as examples of the downfall of Philadelphia in particular and civilization in general.

No such stories here. Our recent major projects—Philadelphia Folklore Month and Uses of Tradition—make us more positive about the virtues of Philadelphia and Philadelphians. Lately, we've been moved, inspired, taught, and entertained by countless people with backbone and distinction, extraordinary bearers of tradition.

During Folklore Month, women from Club Cubano cooking bacalaitos (cod fritters) at Spring Garden Folk Festival.

PHOTO: PHILADELPHIA FOLKLORE PROJECT

On October 8th at the Lithuanian Music Hall, Bronius Krokys and Joe Kasinskas sang beautiful traditional Lithuanian harmonies to a crowd of people—many of whom hadn't heard these songs sung for thirty or forty years. Lithuanian folksongs were forbidden by the Soviets before glasnost, but here in Philadelphia Mr. Krokys has remembered and with the help of Joe Kasinskas, he is painstakingly recording the words and music to a priceless legacy. That same day, African American women gathered in Germantown to teach and learn African techniques of hairbraiding, passing on a contemporary folk art of beauty and creativity, creating a new legacy.

Traditions continue because people choose—sometimes at great odds—to use them. The disregard of others, economic necessities: there are many reasons why people lose touch with traditions. Part of our job, here at the Philadelphia Folklore Project, is to make it easier for people to hold on to traditions that matter. Philadelphia Folklore Month was a step towards that end. Next year much more is in store. We plan to complete our *Guide to Philadelphia Folklife Resources*, bringing attention to more than 300 organizations that preserve and present folklife. A series of slide-tape shows about Philadelphia folk arts and artists, exhibitions on the city's folk art, workshops and performances are all planned. We truly can't do it without you. If you haven't already done so, please become a member. And if you are depressed by urban horror stories, buy our book "Uses of Tradition" or video "The Palm Weavers," for a more positive view of how people persevere and make extraordinary art of everyday life!

Best holiday wishes from all of us.

Debora Kodish

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The **Philadelphia Folklore Project** conducts research and develops public programs on the city's folklife, past and present. For more information call (215) 238-0096.

FOLKLORE EVERYWHERE:
PHILADELPHIA FOLKLORE MONTH A ROUSING SUCCESS

Kofi Asante and Company bring the crowd to its feet at the opening event of Folklore Month.

PHOTO: PHILADELPHIA FOLKLORE PROJECT

Talking drums opened Philadelphia Folklore Month, when Kofi Asante and his company galvanized an audience with dynamic stories, dances, stiltwalkers, and poetry of African and African American experiences. Kofi introduced the afternoon's events, and the Month itself by speaking movingly about the importance of maintaining and respecting cultural traditions. From this powerful beginning to the very end of October thirty-one days later, Philadelphia Folklore Month was a lively testimony to the ways in which folklore can bring people together.

Here at the PFP, we had worked for three years to make this event happen. We wanted to bring attention to people all over the city who are dedicated to preserving or presenting folk traditions. We hoped to raise public consciousness about the value of traditions that connect us to the past and point our way to the future. We wanted people to learn about the meaning and significance of our arts of everyday life. Philadelphia Folklore Month took off beyond our wildest expectations. 72 groups participated, offering 121 events (more than half of them free) at sites all over the city.

We have been especially delighted by peoples' warm and personal responses to Month programs. Folklore Month provided people with bridges to their own pasts, and with ways of understanding the current arts of their neighbors. It brought together generations. (Four generations of a single family came to our palm-weaving workshop!) Visitors to "Uses of Tradition: Arts of Italian Americans in Philadelphia," the exhibition that we produced in collaboration with the Fleisher Art Memorial were quick to tell us that the exhibit opened their eyes to arts that they had taken for granted.

Al Walter, stonemason and workshop foreman, commented that he was glad to see Felice Sabatino, his predecessor in the Bryn Athyn shop, finally get the recognition that he deserved. Joe Boccanera commented on the lack of recognition generally accorded traditional artists when he jokingly said that his father, a modest man who forged fine ironwork at the Samuel Yellin Metalworks for years, would turn over in his grave from surprise if he knew that his work was in an art gallery. Bobby Pandola, maker of exquisite mummers' costumes, stood admiring the painted plaster saints turned out by Walter Magnani's Catholic Statuary Company. "My mother and aunts all had these things," he said, "but I never knew before how they were made." At the exhibition, artists in one traditional medium were eagerly inspecting the works of those who were masters of other mediums. Yola Savastano's daughter looked at her mother's beautiful beadwork differently after seeing it on exhibition, and admired by crowds of strangers. She had taken this familiar art for granted before, but after the exhibition she asked her mother for a sample to frame and preserve.

Other visitors wrote their impressions in our guest book: "I found this to be a real eye opener, for example the window displays which I probably passed by without realizing all that was involved," wrote Joseph Freedman after viewing the exhibition. "Wonderful—touched my heart! wrote Phyllis Macchione. "Worthwhile in going back to one's roots" wrote Mickie and Nick D'Amico. "I never tire of the exhibit" wrote Oreste Unti.

A gathering of artists represented in "Uses of Tradition," with their families and PFP staff. PHOTO: KELLY AND MASSA PHOTOGRAPHY

And so it seemed to go all over town. Our Folklore Month collaborators tell us that the occasion provided "a real catalyst to try out some interesting ideas, to work with other groups." Attendance at Folklore Month events was generally excellent—in many cases far outpacing the usual. Collaborating organizations report that Folklore Month provided them with an opportunity to display previously unrecognized collections, to reach new audiences; groups appreciated the pat on the back that the Month offered. "The tremendous success of Folklore Month demonstrates that culture is indeed a part of everyone's everyday life and that creative exploration and expression are vital to our existence," wrote Cathryn Coate, Executive Director of the Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance. We agree—and we thank all of you for making Philadelphia Folklore Month a success.

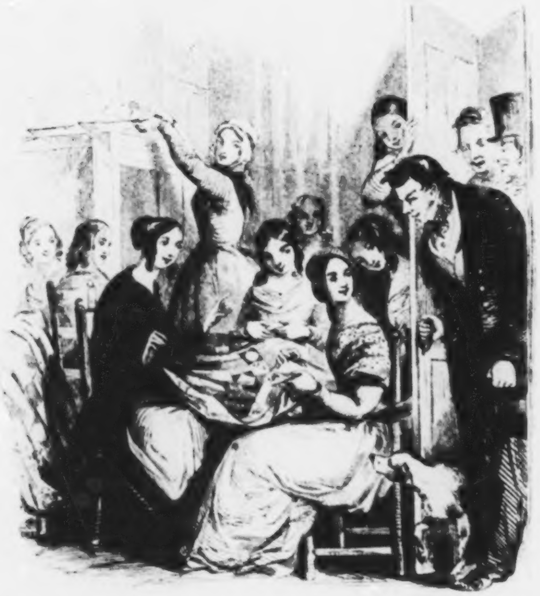
You may not have received the beautiful, large-format 28-page **Scrapbook** that we published. Chock-full of photographs and descriptions of the city's folklife as presented in Month events, the scrapbook includes questionnaires for you to fill out and return so that we can learn about your own folk traditions. The scrapbook is, in the words of Philadelphia mummers' costume-maker Palma Lucas: "a keepsake, something to hold on to." We hope you think so, too. If you didn't receive a copy, they are available for $3.00 from the office.

PENNSYLVANIA GERMAN FOLK ARTS: DOWRY, QUILTS AND MARRIAGE GIFTS

Pennsylvania

German families of the early to mid-19th century placed an important emphasis on dowry practices and the accumulation of both decorative and utilitarian household goods in anticipation of marriage. Many kinds of material objects—the marriage bed, a variety of decorative and useful textiles, other furniture such as the "dower chest," and household utilitarian objects—were commissioned from the craftsworkers of the community, or were made within the individual households and included in dowry gifts.

These dowry objects had many uses and meanings. They ensured the comfortabilities of the betrothed couple, and expressed the hopes, guardianship, and well wishes of their extended family and friends. Finely crafted, colorfully decorated, and embellished with traditional religious and allegorical symbols, dowry goods often represented the major acquisitions of a married couple, and were sometimes important indications of wealth and stability in a newly formed household.



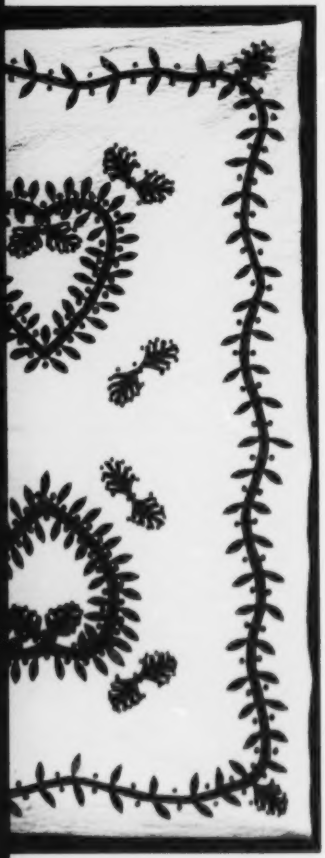
"The Quilting Frolic" from ***Godey's Lady's Book*** *(1849).*
PHOTO: PHILADELPHIA MUSEUM OF ART

Women's

production of needlework was an important part of this accumulation of goods. For many women in the 19th century, quiltmaking became closely intertwined with the preparation for marriage. At an early age, girls began to sew in anticipation of their weddings, accumulating and storing completed needlework for their future households. While oral folk tradition suggests that among some groups the prescribed number of quilts a woman was to have produced by the time of her marriage was thirteen, 19th-century inventories and dowry descriptions show that the usual number was between seven and ten. An admonition embroidered on one example warns young women:

> "At your quilting, maids don't delay,
> A maid who is quiltless at twenty-one,
> Never shall meet her bridal sun.

Often the final quilt completed before the wedding was the product of a quilting "bee" or "frolic," where friends of the bride gathered to finish the quilting. These bridal quilts became particularly treasured possessions and served as a tangible reminder of goodwill and hope for a fruitful union.



Pennsylvania Dowry Quilt, c. 1860-90 from the Philadelphia Museum of Art collection.

PHOTO:
PHILADELPHIA MUSEUM OF ART

To store

and protect these accumulated textiles, several different forms of chest also became popular dowry gifts. These were often embellished with the name of the owner or initials of the married couple. Many of these chests were acquired by both males and females during their adolescent years in anticipation of their marriage. Carefully stored in these chests and used only on limited special occasions, many dowry or bridal quilts survive in pristine condition.

The customs

and practices surrounding dowry and the ceremonial presentation of marriage gifts were found not only among Pennsylvania German populations, but also in a wide range of other cultural groups in 18th and 19th century America. Dowry customs among these groups have survived as an important impetus for the creation and maintenance of many traditional folk arts and crafts, and are only now being recognized and further documented. They survive in today's society in the form of wedding showers, honeymoon vacations and gifts to the "starter home." As such, they show a continuation of these early celebratory practices surrounding marriage.

Jack L. Lindsey

Jack Lindsey is Vice-President of the Board of the PFP. He co-curated the exhibition "'From Pieces Here to Pieces Join:' Nineteenth Century Applique Quilts," part of Folklore Month and on display until the end of December at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, where he is Assistant Curator of American Art.

AFRICAN AMERICAN HOLIDAY TRADITION IN PHILADELPHIA

Kwanzaa

represents a special holiday occasion among African Americans. Kwanza means 'first' in Kiswahili and refers to the first fruits of harvest, with the addition of a final 'a' as an additional symbolism so that there will be seven letters to correspond with the number seven which is of core importance to the event. Kwanzaa gains its significance from ancient concepts of the harvest season as practiced in Africa. First conceptualized in 1966 by Dr. Maulana Karenga, Kwanzaa has since gained international attention as a celebration observed from December 26th through January 1st primarily, but not exclusively, by African Americans in the United States. Kwanzaa is not considered as an alternative to Christmas. As Christmas has become more commercialized, it is a way toward making the holiday season more meaningful for African American families.

Based on the Nguzo Saba (Seven Principles), Kwanzaa embodies many symbols relating to the life and struggles of African American people. There are seven days of Kwanzaa, each devoted to a principle: Umoja (unity), Kugichagulia (self-determination), Ujima (collective work and responsibility), Ujamaa (cooperative economics), Nia (purpose), Kuumba (creativity), and Imani (faith). In addition, there are seven material components of Kwanzaa: mazao (vegetables and fruit), mkeka (mat), kinara (the candleholder for seven candles), mishumaa (the candles: one black, three green, and three red), vibunzi (ears of corn to reflect the number of offspring in the home), kikombe cha umoja (unity cup), and zawadi (gifts). These make up the standard table decorations for the celebration of the holiday.

Philadelphia offers one of the fullest calendars of Kwanzaa events in the United States. According to Abiodun of the House of Kuumba, the first large Kwanzaa assembly in Philadelphia was held in 1970 at Clarence Pickett Middle School "to introduce an idea to people." The idea has grown until now the Kwanzaa Cooperative has instituted a Kwanzaa hotline to announce Kwanzaa public events over the entire holiday period. (The hotline number is 769-7324). It is now a tradition for the Kwanzaa Cooperative to bring Dr. Karenga himself to address the local community on the first night of Kwanzaa.

Additionally, many pre-Kwanzaa events are scheduled at local libraries and schools. For example, in mid-December this year, Harambee Institute will celebrate its 15th Kwanzaa Festival. Moreover, Philadelphia is one of the only U.S. cities to feature a Kwanzaa Parade. Coordinated by Malika A. Malik, the parade kicks off a full day of cultural activities on Saturday,

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Events Opportunities Announcements and News

Hear Lithuanian Folksongs. Come to the first of our "potlucks and performances" for 1990. Bring a covered dish and enjoy the beautiful songs of Bronius Krokys and Joe Kasinskas. We'll celebrate Saint Casimir's Day, glasnost and the talent and perseverance of a remarkable traditional singer. Mr. Krokys was recently honored as a master traditional artist by the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts. For the last two years, he has been passing on his knowledge of traditional Lithuanian songs to Mr. Kasinskas. Join us for good music, good food, and good conversation! March 4, 1990 from 4:00-6:00 pm at the Fleisher Art Memorial, 719 Catharine Street, Philadelphia. Admission: Free with a covered dish to PFP members, $3.00 with a covered dish to non-members, $6.00 without a covered dish.

Attend Grants Workshops. We are repeating last year's highly successful workshops for those who wish to apply to the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts for funds for folk arts projects. Amy Skillman, Director of the Office of Folklife at the Pennsylvania Heritage Affairs Commission will be joined by representatives from the PCA. Speakers will provide you with information about funding programs and categories in a morning roundtable discussion (10:00-12:00). In the afternoon (1:00-4:30), you will be able to schedule individual consultations with workshop leaders. The workshop will be held on February 22, 1990 at the Fleisher Art Memorial, 719 Catharine Street, Philadelphia. For more information, call Gwen Hornblow at the PFP office: 238-0096.

View Videos about Philadelphia Folklife. "The Palm Weavers," is a 10-minute video about Philadelphians who weave beautiful arrangements of palm stalks for Palm Sunday. Introducing viewers to the makers, meanings and uses of this traditional art, the video was researched by PFP staff Dorothy Noyes and Jan Greenberg and produced by Jan Greenberg. And that's not all! "The Palm Weavers" is just the first of a new series of educational videos that we are producing, thanks to recently awarded grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts. Each video will provide a glimpse into a different Philadelphia folk tradition: public folk arts, the folk art of making mummers' costumes, folk puppetry, and traditional foodways. This project is part of our attempt to provide useful resources for schools, neighborhood groups, libraries, and interested individuals. (To order "The Palm Weavers," just fill out the form in this issue).

See More Uses of Tradition. Our successful exhibition, "Uses of Tradition: Arts of Italian Americans in Philadelphia" will have a second life as a traveling photo exhibition, available for use by museums, historical societies, and other agencies around the state, thanks to the support of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. We expect to have the show available for borrowers by the middle of 1990. The Pennsylvania Heritage Affairs Commission will be handling arrangements for touring the show. For information, call the PFP office. And if you missed "Uses of Tradition" during its Fleisher run, you can still purchase a catalog discussing the arts of Italian Americans in Philadelphia. See the attached order form.

Don't Miss "Stand By Me". "Stand By Me: African American Expressive Culture in Philadelphia" is an extraordinary photo show at the Afro American Historical and Cultural Museum. PFP folklorist Jerrilyn McGregory joined with folklorist Glen Hinson and photographer Roland Freeman to produce a methodologically innovative project that provides glimpses of many significant traditions of Philadelphia's African American communities. The PFP is proud to have supported the project, and we urge you to view the show before it closes in March of 1990. For information, call the Afro American Historical and Cultural Museum at 574-0380.

Job opening. Pending funds, the Philadelphia Folklore Project anticipates hiring a part-time staff folklorist/field researcher to contribute to exhibitions and media projects on historical and contemporary Philadelphia folk arts and their makers. Potential applicants should be able to meet deadlines and write clearly. They should also be able to professionally document folk traditions with a camera and tape recorder. Knowledge of Philadelphia communities, public folklore, and exhibition practice are encouraged. Hours, starting date, and salary are negotiable, but the individual must be available June-December 1990. Please send a letter outlining relevant experience and current interests by February 1, 1990 to Search Committee, Philadelphia Folklore Project, 719 Catharine Street, Philadelphia, PA 19147. Minority applicants are strongly encouraged to apply.

Are You a Community Scholar? The Smithsonian's Office of Folklife Programs plans to offer a Summer Folklore Institute for Community Scholars in Washington, D.C., for two weeks (probably in July). The institute is intended to introduce community scholars to the history of folklore scholarship, to provide information about resources for projects, to introduce techniques of collecting, storing and making accessible folklore materials, and to discuss how to produce programs based on folklore traditions. For more information, write or call Betty Belanus, Director, Folklore Summer Institute, Office of Folklife Programs, 955 L'Enfant Plaza, SW, Suite 2600, Washington, D.C. 20560 or call (202) 287-3449. Application forms will be available by January 1, 1990.

Welcome to new members. Many thanks for their support to: Jane Beck, Monsignor Arthur J. Centrella and the parishioners of Our Lady of Consolation Church, Meg Brady and Dave Stanley, Vincent Clerico, June Crawford, John Paul Dalsimer and Susan J. Ellis, Mindy Flexer, Henry Glassie, Jake Garrison and Garrison Printing Co., Adele Schwarz Greenspan, Patricia A. Hunt, Anne and Jerry Kaplan, Amy Korstvedt, Meryl Levitz, Hope Makler, Mary C. Mammarella, Rev. Nick Martorano and the parishioners of St. Nicholas of Tolentine Church, Kim Moon, Tony and Cora Moreira, Mamie Nichols, Sandy Pomerantz, Arthur Sherman, Dr. Shari Sobel, Cassandra Stancil, Shalom Staub, R. Patricia Trickey and Aviva Weintraub. Special thanks to patrons: Marcolina Brothers and Samuel Yellin Metalworkers.

Thank you. We are grateful to funders for 1989 projects: The Pew Charitable Trusts, William Penn Foundation, National Endowment for the Humanities, National Endowment for the Arts, Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, Pennsylvania Humanities Council, American Association for State and Local History, American Folklore Society, Fidia Research Foundation, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, Philadelphia National Bank, Provident National Bank, Scott Paper Company Foundation, University of Pennsylvania School of Arts and Sciences.

And again. Thanks to valiant volunteers Jeannette Touhey and Grace Russionello.

KWANZAA IN PHILADELPHIA

→ *from page 5*

December 16th at Temple University's Gladfelter Hall. The parade will commence at 1:00 pm.

At each

public event, children (being symbolic of the harvest Kwanzaa represents) assist in the candlelighting ceremony. At these public events, generally all seven candles are lit as an explanation is give of each of the principles. The seven candles include one black, three red, and three green. The three red candles are placed on the left and the three green are placed on the right, with the one black candle placed in the middle of the kinara. The public events also feature a full complement of performers and draw a large community audience. (It is reputed that the a capella performing group Nanikha began its performing career at one of these events at Harambee Institute.) Finally, an Afrikan marketplace, usually proferring the handicrafts of local artisans, constitutes another mainstay of these very cultural events.

At private enactments during Kwanzaa, each day another principle is recited and another candle lit. After the candle is lit, the principle becomes the topic of discussion among all present. On the final day all candles are ablaze and the final principle is discussed.

The Karamu (feast) is also of significance during Kwanzaa. Held on the evening of December 31st, it is considered an adult activity and serves essentially a social function. On Imani, the last day of Kwanzaa, zawadi (gifts) are traditionally given to children. It is stipulated that the gifts be handcrafted or functional (like a book) in order to discourage further commercialization. Gift-giving is mainly for children, not mandatory, and should be based on merit.

Kwanzaa has gained widely in practice among African Americans. Kwanzaa is a holiday which readily allows for the establishment of traditions especially for young families as each must come to terms with celebrating the holiday season. The first generation of children raised on Kwanzaa are now entering adulthood. The private celebration of Kwanzaa will depend on the choices that they make as they raise their own families. No doubt, the public celebrations of Kwanzaa will continue as an expression of cultural identity.

Jerrilyn McGregory

FOR SALE
ORDER FORM

Uses of Tradition: Arts of Italian Americans in Philadelphia. By Dorothy Noyes. Foreword by Richard N. Juliani. 80 pp. Illustrated (color and black and white). Description of the many traditional arts that Italian Americans both inherited and made their own; written to accompany the exhibition of the same name. $15.00

The Palm Weavers. Videotaped slide program featuring three groups of Philadelphians who weave stalks of palm into beautiful bouquets for traditional Palm Sunday observances. 10 minutes. $20.00 (Call us for rental information: 238-0096).

Philadelphia Folklore Month t-shirt. Attractive black and red logo on white). Sizes: large and extra-large only. $10.00

Uses of Tradition **poster**, unfolded, suitable for framing. $3.00

Philadelphia Folklore Month: A Scrapbook. Descriptions of folk traditions presented during October 1989 by more than 70 local organizations. $3.00

Philadelphia
FOLKLORE
MONTH
October
1989

Philadelphia Folks and Their Lore. Educational supplement produced with the Philadelphia Daily News. Articles, games, quizzes, reading lists for elementary and secondary school kids, their teachers, and their parents. 16 pp. Illustrated. $3.00

QUANTITY	TITLE	COST
	Shipping and handling	$3.00
	TOTAL:	

NAME: ______

ADDRESS: ______

Please make checks payable to:
The Philadelphia Folklore Project.
Thank you!

May the pleasures of Kwanzaa, Chanukah, Christmas, New Year's, and el Día de los Reyes be long-lived. May you have many reasons to celebrate... We wish you the joys of the season!

Works-in-progress

Newsletter of the Philadelphia Folklore Project

The Philadelphia Folklore Project
719 Catharine Street
Philadelphia, PA 19147

PHILADELPHIA FOLKLORE PROJECT

BECOME A MEMBER

Membership in the Philadelphia Folklore Project supports a wide range of activities— from newsletters to technical assistance programs. Members receive discounts on publications and reduced or free admission to PFP events. Join today!

$ 10	**Student/ fixed income**. Receive a year's subscription to "Works-in-progress," the newsletter of the Philadelphia Folklore Project.
$ 25	**Friend**. Receive the newsletter and free or reduced admission to PFP events.
$ 35	**Family.** Same as above for more than one person in a single household.
$ 50	**Supporting Friend**. Receive all of the above, and a PFP T-shirt.
$ 150	**Patron**. Receive all of the above and a free PFP publication (**Uses of Tradition: Arts of Italian Americans in Philadelphia**, or the program book for Philadelphia Folklore Month). *Additional contributions to the Project are invited. We thank you!*

NAME ADDRESS

CITY/STATE/ZIP PHONE

T-SHIRT SIZE (FOR SUPPORTING AND PATRON MEMBERSHIPS ONLY): L XL

☐ $10 STUDENT/ FIXED INCOME ☐ $25 FRIEND ($5 TAX-DEDUCTIBLE) ☐ $35 FAMILY ($5 TAX-DEDUCTIBLE)

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Works-in-progress

NEWSLETTER OF THE PHILADELPHIA [redacted] VOLUME 3 NUMBER 2 SUMMER 1990

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Survivors

Who made the Mummers' chenille suits, and when and how were they made? See "Tell Us About Chenille..." on p. 7.

are described in this newsletter. But their courage and their stories of survival are not the subjects of our articles. Instead, we focus on dance, costume, toys, and songs. The message, of course, is that these folk arts are traditions that kept peoples' spirits alive in the midst of horrors; these are traditions to which people return when building new lives.

Newsletter articles show how folk arts are part of struggles for independence, for cultural as well as individual survival. Lithuanian folksongs were forbidden by Stalin, who tried to replace these traditions with songs about comrades and Mother Russia. The tradition went underground; singing Lithuanian songs became a sign of courage and resistance. Rural people from Cambodia with their own folk dance traditions have, in refugee camps and here, turned to royal court dance: a symbol of the ancient and majestic Khmer culture that was.

In Philadelphia, we are witnessing many kinds of revivals and reinventions of folk arts. Single individuals sometimes make these kinds of revivals possible. Bronius Krokys, with his incredible repertoire of traditional song, has stimulated local interest in Lithuanian folklife. His acts of preservation have wide reverberations, touching Lithuanians who have lost their own connections with the past, a general public, and people with an interest in world and "new music," drawn by the chance to hear a music not usually represented on the airwaves or in the record bins. Chamroeun Yin's arrival in Philadelphia has encouraged activity within the Cambodian community, as adults and children embrace the opportunity to learn the movements, meanings, and rituals of court dance. Myer Adler's hand-crafted, home-made groggers and dreydls have inspired a new generation of Jews who are searching for folk crafts that are part of their own tradition.

Revival, like survival, involves making choices about what is worth saving. We are grateful to those who widen all of our alternatives by preserving the folk arts that are their heritage.

Debora Kodish

BROCCOLI - SOVIETS!
READ OU
SOVIE
GO
HOME!

Posters for a Lithuanian Independence demonstration are only one way in which a local family tries to keep their cultural inheritance alive. (See story on p.4)

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The **Philadelphia Folklore Project** conducts research and develops public programs on the city's folklife, past and present. For more information call (215) 238-0096.

APSARAS IN PHILADELPHIA:
KEEPING KHMER COURT DANCE ALIVE

Carved

in the majestic stone at Angkor Wat, the 12th-century temples built by Khmer kings, are dancing celestial maidens or *apsaras*—their faces pitted and scarred by the bombs that have torn Cambodia since 1970. Memories of the apsaras endure, and when Mom Sak, a seamstress from Cambodia now living in Philadelphia, makes elaborate costumes for local Cambodian brides and traditional dancers, she creates patterns like those she remembers at Angkor Wat.

War has laid ruin to Cambodia and sent her people into exile. In refugee camps and "third countries" (the lands in which Cambodians have settled), people have struggled to create new lives. Ancient Khmer traditions of dance have helped in this process. Like other Eastern dance traditions, Khmer court and folk dances depend not only upon rigorously taught traditions of movement, but also upon knowledge of sacred and symbolic ritual, myth, belief, music, and costume. Dances embody a state of being; they are rooted in history and values. For some, learning to dance has been a way of learning to be Khmer.

Chamroeun Yin,

32, was first introduced to Khmer court dance in elementary school in Battambong, Cambodia, when a dancer from Phnom Penh came to teach the children some simple steps and motions. But he began to learn the dance in earnest when he was in the refugee camp at Khao-I-Dang, Thailand. Also in this camp were a number of former lead dancers from the royal ballet: a group of nearly 100 skilled artists who had trained and performed in the palace under Prince Norodom Sihanouk, the last of a long line of Khmer royalty to support the dance. Starting in 1979 at the camp, such palace and university-trained dancers began to teach dance and music to young people. Chamroeun Yin was one of those recruited for this troupe.

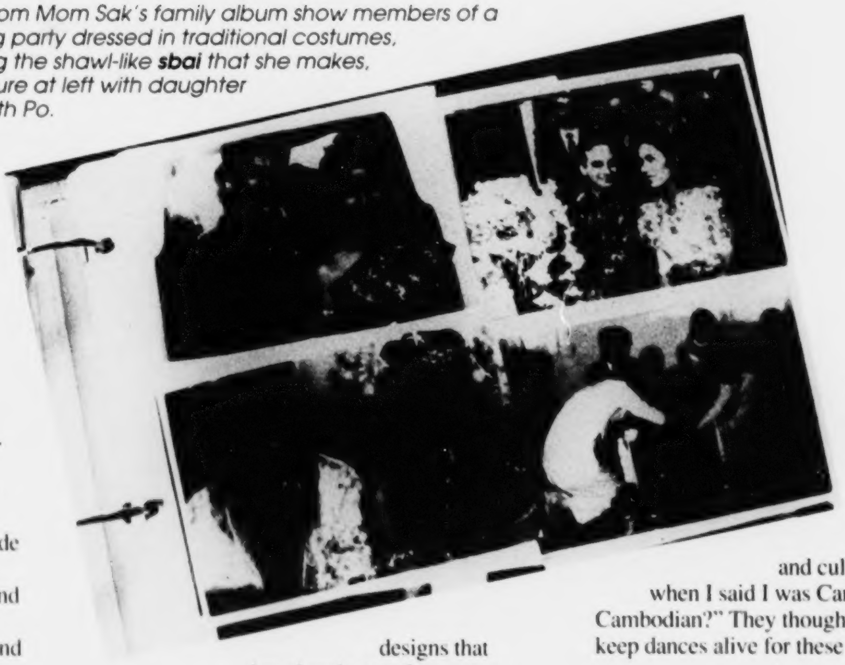
Unsure of his own abilities, at first he hesitated. But he wanted to learn a skill. He says that he didn't know what to do with himself, or how he might make a living. Encouraged by others, he began to dance with the troupe, practicing daily, undertaking the discipline required.

In 1980, those in Kao-I-Dang feared for their safety as the Thai armies and occupying Vietnamese troops poised on either side of the camp. The dancers and their families were named artistic refugees, and 100 people, including Chamroeun Yin, came to the United States. (The story of these dancers and their escape is told in a powerfully moving film, *Dance of Tears*, cited below). The group resettled in the Washington D.C. area, and, with the help of the National Council for the Traditional Arts and the Folk Arts program of the National Endowment for the Arts, they began to prepare for a national tour.

Called the Khmer Classical Dance Troupe, the group began to perform, and Chamroeun Yin was able to dance for tens of thousands of people across the country. When the tour ended, he and the others returned to Washington. But dancing could not provide them with a living, and members of the troupe began to disperse, looking for jobs. Last winter, Chamroeun Yin came to Philadelphia where he now works as a tailor making wedding costumes and other clothes chiefly for the Cambodian community. The Khmer Classical Dance Troupe disbanded, but like his friends, Chamroeun Yin is ready to return if he is needed for a performance. In the meantime, he has begun to pass on his knowledge to young people here, teaching the dances which he has mastered. As well, here in Philadelphia, he has come to know others with a love of Khmer dance, music, and costume.

For the last seven years, Mom Sak has been making costumes for Cambodians who have settled here. She grew into this art gradually. As the wife of a teacher in Cambodia, she was "a kind of a beautician," helping brides prepare for

Pages from Mom Sak's family album show members of a wedding party dressed in traditional costumes, including the shawl-like ***sbai*** *that she makes, see picture at left with daughter Seyharoth Po.*



traditional weddings. She observed how the elders made wedding dresses, and imitated patterns and designs that she remembered seeing on the apsaras at Angkor Wat. Later, in the camps in Thailand, she renewed her interest, watching how dancers and artists created the special costumes for each of the characters in ritual dance dramas: females, males, monkeys, giants, gods and goddesses, demons, celestial maidens and other characters, some from the Rāmkar (the Khmer epic story of Rām, similar to the Rāmāyana).

Preparation of these costumes is time-consuming, requiring much specialized knowledge and skill. It takes Mom Sak more than a month to make a single shawl-like *sbai* alone, for thousands of tiny glass beads are sewn onto the cloth— painstakingly shaped into repeated rows of stylized flowers and stars. Other costume pieces— headpieces, masks and jewelry in particular— must be brought from Thailand, and in many cases, Philadelphia dancers have had to do without the headpieces, masks, and jewelry that signify the identity of particular characters.

Mom Sak

uses available materials and improvises when necessary. She remembers that in Cambodia, these costumes were made of finest hand-woven silks, gold and silver. There, such dance was meant for the court and not for ordinary people, she reminds. Dances that were once associated only with kings and court life are now practiced more widely, symbols of Cambodian identity and means for bringing together a Cambodian community. Chamroeun Yin agrees. He adds that Cambodian court dances are important both for Cambodians and Americans. He says, "Most Cambodian people in this country, they go to American schools and know American ways. They don't know what is polite or impolite, or what our elders know. So if they can learn more about dancing, they can understand more about Cambodian tradition and culture. And my American friends, when I said I was Cambodian, they said, "What is Cambodian?" They thought I was Chinese. So I want to keep dances alive for these people, too."

Chamroeun Yin and Mom Sak are two of many who keep Khmer traditions alive in Philadelphia. Here, as in the refugee camps, traditions are shared and pieced together everyday. People who have experienced extreme trauma and hardship struggle to pull their lives and culture back together, using the image and beauty of the centuries-old divine apsaras as guide.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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Paul Cravath. *Earth in Flower: An Historical and Descriptive Study of the Classical Dance Drama of Cambodia.* Ph.D. dissertation, University of Hawaii, 1985.

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Chan Moly Sam. *Khmer Court Dance*. Newington, CT: Khmer Studies Institute, 1987. (P.O. Box 11-497, Newington, CT 06111. $16.95)

Sam-Ang Sam and Chan Moly Sam. *Khmer Folk Dance.* Newington, CT: Khmer Studies Institute, 1987. (P.O. Box 11-497, Newington, CT 06111. $12.95)

(A fuller bibliography is available at the PFP: call us!)

"WE SANG ALL THE TIME:"
REVIVING LITHUANIAN FOLKSONGS

From the outside, the house looks like its Far Northeast neighbors. But inside, where 72-year old Bronius Krokys and his family live, there are many signs of difference. Lithuanian is spoken. Paper cuts, wood cuts, embroidered hangings— all from Lithuania— adorn the walls. "No Broccoli, No Soviets," "Read Our Lips— Soviets Go Home" read posters drawn by Bronius' daughter Rasa for a demonstration supporting Lithuanian independence. Downstairs, the family listens to short-wave broadcasts from Lithuania, although the broadcasts are often jammed these days. The family is deeply involved in Lithuanian organizations and community activities.

The preservation of his mother's song repertoire is another part of Bronius Krokys' general commitment towards cultural conservation. A fine singer, Magdalena Krokys raised eight children on a farm in Mockava, in the southern Lithuanian region of Dainava, an area called the "country of songs."

Singing was a part of life back in Lithuania. Mr. Krokys remembers, "We sang all the time" for courting, funerals, harvests, and in the village church. His was a particularly good voice, and he was encouraged in his love for music. He remembers his first solo, when he was rewarded for his talents: "Long, long ago, I heard the grown-ups talking. 'Bronius is a good singer!' they said. Then once, my godfather visited and my parents invited him to sit down and have coffee. 'And Bronius will sing for us,' they said. And for my song, he gave me two dollars. And it was big money!"

Mr. Krokys still remembers the song that he sang then. It was "On a river of Nemunas," about the main river in Lithuania and the meadows through which the waters ran. The song describes a young soldier lying dead, his blond hair mixing with the grass and flowers of the meadow. The soldier had died fighting for the freedom of his country.

Bronius Krokys has witnessed many struggles for Lithuanian independence. When he was a child, Lithuanians were fighting the Poles for their freedom; he remembers his mother and sister telling him to drop to the ground at the sound of gunshots.

Songs about freedom fighters struggling for independence, as well as any songs remotely patriotic, religious, or "ethnic" were all banned after the Soviet annexation of Lithuania. In the military service in 1940, Mr. Krokys was taught "appropriate" songs. "You could sing about "Comrade Stalin, the Red Army, and all those atheistic songs. You couldn't go to church and everything was dangerous, because you could get arrested and deported to Siberia."

Although he hever stopped singing entirely, Mr. Krokys remembers being afraid that someone might overhear. During World War II, Mr. Krokys was taken to Germany as a slave laborer. After the War, he was liberated by the Americans and interned for three years in a displaced persons camp.

Bridget Kasinskas keeps a family album in her violin case.

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Rasa Krokys, Bridget Kasinskas, Bronius Krokys, and Joe Kasinskas singing songs around the Krokys dinner table.

He never saw his parents again. In February 1947, along with hundreds of thousands of other Lithuanians, they were deported to Siberia where they died of starvation and frost.

Sponsored by an uncle in Rochester, New York, Mr. Krokys was able to come to America. "I was very poor," he recalls. "I had a suitcase full of books and a toothbrush and the clothes on my back." He settled in Rochester, where he married and raised a family. He gave up his dream of becoming a doctor, and worked days at Eastman Kodak Company, taking night classes for more than ten years until he became a chemical engineer. In all that time, he was singing. He taught children— his own and their friends— both songs and poetry, and helped them in performances.

He retired

in 1982, and moved with his family to Philadelphia. He heard musicians Joe and Bridget Kasinskas perform Lithuanian songs at a community picnic. "I liked his music and also his moustache," smiled Mr. Krokys. Mr. Kasinskas, a third-generation Lithuanian, a musician and an accomplished composer, had begun to search out Lithuanian folksongs, exploring his roots and using these songs in musical settings of his own composition. Mr. Krokys approached the younger man and said that he knew some songs. A partnership was born.

In the last two years, working steadily, the two have recorded the words, tunes, and traditional harmonies to 183 of Mr. Krokys' songs. These efforts have been supported by the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, which awarded a grant to the two men enabling them to preserve this musical tradition. Their collaboration has blossomed into a family affair, for Rasa Krokys and Bridget Kasinskas have joined the two men for performances, supplying traditional harmonies.

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News, Queries, Thanks...

◐ **We're thrilled—**and want to pass along the news and our thanks! We've been nominated for a **Philadelphia Music Award** for **"Outstanding Achievement in Folk Music"** for **Philadelphia Folklore Month**. Awarded by the Philadelphia Music Foundation each year, the Music Awards "recognize outstanding achievement" in a range of music genres. Nominees are selected by a panel of music critics, radio station personnel, music educators, and music industry executives and "are intended to reflect the Philadelphia-area groups and performers who excelled in music in 1989." Winners will be announced at an awards ceremony/press conference on June 26th: we're thrilled to be nominees. This nomination honors the energy and imagination of many of you—people at 72 collaborating organizations who worked hard to make Folklore Month a success, funders whose generosity made the Month possible, friends and members who came to events, and a tireless staff! THANK YOU ALL AGAIN—and thanks to the Philadelphia Music Foundation for the nomination!

Lobster Captain, 1915 Mummers Parade.

PHOTO COURTESY MUMMERS MUSEUM

◐ **Tell Us About Chenille-work and other Mummers' Arts.** Who made chenille suits (and when and how were they made)? How did they learn? Why did chenille-work die out? Who started using mirrors, sequins, and plumes on the suits (and when)? Where did the ideas for "jockey," "clown," and "dove" suits come from? And that's just the begining of what we want to know! If you remember someone who crafted mummers' costumes, or if you can tell us something

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MYER ADLER: ADVENTURES IN CREATIVE RECYCLING

Myer Adler in his workshop.

PHOTO
CATHERINE JACOBS

Myer Adler hadn't made a dreydl for decades when, about seven years ago, a friend asked him to make one for his child. This request inspired a revival of Adler's interest in some traditional Jewish crafts. When he was a young boy, he and his friends made simple groggers and dreydls (noisemakers and toy tops, respectively) from all manner of discarded odds and ends. Even a small scrap of wood from a fruit crate or a broken piece of furniture was valued for what it might become. This is still characteristic of Mr. Adler's creations. In contrast to his one-of-a-kind hand-made creations, most commercially available groggers and dreydls today are mass-produced and often made of poor materials.

Myer Adler was born in 1914 and raised in a *shtetl* (village) in Poland. He came to the United States in 1949, a survivor of both Stalin and Hitler. With his family's help, he ran a grocery store in Powelton until the 1970s. Since his retirement, he spends many hours in his basement workshop creating groggers and dreydls used during Jewish holidays. He has witnessed many differences in how Jewish traditions were observed in Poland and America. One kind of change (partly a result of increasing affluence) has been a decline in the practice of crafting traditional items for ceremony and celebration. During holidays, people generally devote special energy to creating the means for celebration. But few people actually still make their own groggers or dreydls.

The grogger, a noisemaker, is used in conjunction with sacred readings in synangogue during the celebration of Purim in March. This holiday commemorates Queen Esther's successful effort to foil Haman's plan to kill the Jewish people. As the story of Esther is read, children sound their groggers loudly in an attempt to drown out the sound of Haman's name.

Each of Mr. Adler's groggers is unique in material and design. He saves odds and ends from around his house, and rescues useful pieces of discarded wood to use as parts for the groggers. (A broken wooden hanger, for example, was turned into a fish-shaped grogger). His groggers have many different voices, as well, because of the wide variety of materials that he uses.

The dreydl, a toy top with four flat sides, is used in a children's game played during Chanukah. Each side of the toy is decorated with a Hebrew letter and assigned a certain number of points in the game. Players spin the dreydl in turn and win the number of points represented on the side that faces up when the toy top stops.

Each of Mr. Adler's dreydls and groggers represents an adventure in creative recycling. One recent innovation is a dreydl made from a golf ball. (Mr. Adler's living room overlooks a golf course and his backyard is frequently visited by stray golf balls.) He has made dreydls from old pepper grinders, turned knobs from bedsteads, and rolling pin parts. Mr. Adler occasionally purchases an interesting or exotic piece of wood that he shapes to the desired profile with his lathe and hand chisels. Each dreydl is painted with colorful patterns of stripes and flowers that dazzle when the tops are spun.

Catherine Jacobs

Myer Adler is one of more than 100 traditional artists represented this year in a series of exhibitions of Philadelphia's folklife at City Hall. Collectively called "Philadelphia Meet Yourself," the series is a joint project of the Folklife Center of International House, the City of Philadelphia Office of Arts and Culture and the Philadelphia Folklore Project. The current exhibition, curated by Catherine Jacobs of International House, features Asian American folk arts (May-August 1990). "Passing on Traditions" (September-November 1990) explores the processes of learning and mastering folk art. "Preserving Traditions" (December 1990-February 1991) examines how artifacts store and symbolize traditions. For more information about the series, call the PFP office (238-0096) or the Folklife Center of International House (387-5125).

News, Queries, Thanks...

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about how costumes were made, we want to hear from you. For a slide-tape show that we're doing on the folk art of mummers' costumes, we're especially interested in learning about parade costume-makers (and what they did) from the 1900s-1960s. We're working with the Mummer's Museum, which is undertaking an oral history of the parade, so all information is appreciated. Call Jan Greenberg at the PFP office if you can help.

Volunteer opportunities. Have some spare time? We welcome your help. A Folk Art Auction is in the works: join Board members and others in planning and carrying out a lively event this fall. We also invite volunteers to help us with archival projects here at the office: good ways to learn more about the wide range of local traditions. And we're open to suggestions. If you have some time, give us a call at 238-0096.

HAVE YOU JOINED THE PFP? Members help support day-to-day operations and truly keep us going. We appreciate the support of new members: **Roger Abrahams, Anonymous, Sharon Barr, Charlie Buck, Jeanne Calo, Mr. and Mrs. Oscar Epstein, Robert Eskind, Michael Esposito, Mr. and Mrs. Russell Fama, George J. Felice, Folklife Center of International House, Anna L. Forte, Renee Goldstein, Justine Gordon, Mrs. Maddalena Grimaldi, Lesley Gudehus, Bess Lomax Hawes, Portia Hamilton-Sperr, Germaine Ingram, Thora Jacobson, Paula Johnson, Dorothy Marcucci, E. Ann Matter, Jeremy Nowak and Jano Cohen, Mr. and Mrs. Anthony Palena, Pan Asian Association of Greater Philadelphia, Polish American Cultural Center Museum, Beth Brown Preston, Janis Risch, John Roberts, Theresa Romanowski, Rosario Sauro, Delores Steinberg, Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Still, Carmen Valentino, and D. Yacek-Matulis.**

Thanks to our funders. We are grateful to current funders, including the National Endowment for the Humanities, the William Penn Foundation, the Samuel Fels Foundation, the City of Philadelphia, the Fund for Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, Pennsylvania Humanities Council, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, and our members.

Staff news. The new voice on the telephone belongs to Avis Scott, a Bodine High School grad who is currently enrolled at the University of Virginia. Avis is working with us this summer, helping out with our *Guide to Folklife Resources* in particular. Former PFP staff members are on to great things. These days, Carole Boughter brings her usual energy and imagination to her work as a freelance arts administrator. Jerrilyn McGregory has accepted a position as Assistant Professor of African American Studies and Folklore at the University of Georgia. Currently, Jerrilyn is writing her dissertation about African American community traditions here in Philadelphia. The dissertation draws on research that she began at the PFP. Dorothy Noyes, also writing her dissertation this summer, has won a second Mellon Fellowship to support her research on Catalan folk drama; she is off to Spain for fieldwork. Congratulations, all!

"WE SANG ALL THE TIME"

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Recently, the four (calling themselves the "Lithuanian Folk Music Quartet") performed at a standing-room-only "Potlucks and Performances" evening sponsored by the PFP. The event was a tremendous success. People in the audience eagerly asked questions. Others shared their own memories. Some shed tears at hearing songs for the first time in fifty years. It was a moving experience for performers as well as listeners. When Bronius Krokys first sang for his god-father back in Mockava, he never imagined that seventy years later he would be performing the same song so far from home and to so warm a response.

Since this performance, we have received many requests for books, tapes and records of Lithuanian folksongs. The "Lithuanian Folk Music Quartet" is making a tape of their own songs. Until it is available, Mr. Krokys has assembled some books and records which he is offering for sale. For information, write to Mr. Bronius Krokys, 1124 Hedgerow Lane, Philadelphia, PA 19115, or call 215-671-0397.

Works-in-progress
Newsletter of the Philadelphia Folklore Project

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WORKS IN PROGRESS

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"You can't take the country out of a man": Furman Humphrey and the African American tradition of woodcarving

Carved portrait bust of Martin Luther King by Furman Humphrey. Photo: Graydon Wood

William Bartram, the Quaker naturalist, made numerous observations on the customs and habits of the colonial populations he encountered during his travels through North America from 1775 to 1778. Struck by the complexity and tenacity of various folk traditions, he observed "It is with homage and great esteem that even the most rudimentary and simple town observes some divers art or custom retained from their ancients . . . being swift to establish these even in the most foreign and unyielding of circumstances."

Often, because of the uncertainties brought on by a new and sometimes hostile environment, these early settlement populations sought to reestablish the familiar and comfortable aspects of their former lives, customs, and creative traditions. In doing so, they gained reassurance from the harsh realities often forced upon them.

Times have not changed greatly in this regard. Most of us search for similar aspects of a cultural and personal continuum in much the same way as those eighteenth century communities to which Bartram referred in his journals. In conducting our daily affairs, we take comfort in surrounding ourselves with those familiar customs, beliefs, objects and actions which supply us sustenance and enrich our lives. In the process, we often find ourseves referring back to the learned patterns, traditions, and wisdom of our pasts.

In fact, the character of the city is shaped by diverse cultural traditions, preserved and practiced by different ethnic communities, neighborhood organizations, and individuals. These distinctive folk traditions continue to thrive, preserving the familiar as well as the essential aspects of diverse cultural histories. But it takes individuals—making choices and investing time and effort—to accomplish such acts of preservation.

Carved portrait bust of Malcolm X by Furman Humphrey. Photo: Graydon Wood

One example of this cultural and artistic maintenance of tradition over time and space is the African and African American practice of carving figurative staffs and canes. Mr. Furman Humphrey's mastery of this particular form provides a good example of how a traditional artist's work can span decades and miles, synthesizing and connecting past with present.

Mr. Humphrey was born in Robeson County, North Carolina in 1939. The son of a woodworker and carpenter, Humphrey remembers that his father, Uriah, often made the wooden handles for farm tools and supplied the various other carpentry skills that were necessary within the largely agricultural community in which they lived. He recalls his own fascination, when, as a child, he watched his father work. And, of course, growing up in a rural community, he had ample experience of animals, both domestic and untamed—including varieties which he would recreate on his canes more than forty years later.

Like many other African Americans from rural North Carolina, Mr. Humphrey became one of a large number who relocated to the Philadelphia area in the 1950s and 1960s, curious of the opportunities which awaited them in a larger northern city. He established himself, married in 1962, raised three children, and has been employed in the Maintenance Department of the Philadelphia Museum of Art since 1969.

Once settled in Philadelphia, Mr. Humphrey occasionally used the woodworking and carpentry skills gleaned from his father, producing mostly useful, utilitarian objects which filled the basic domestic needs of his family. His interest in more decorative and detailed wood carving increased dramatically about eight or nine years ago: "I always liked to make things. Handmade and all. You know what they say, 'you can take the man out of the country but you can't take the country out.' I saw the African show and all those things made me want to try my hand again at carving."

The "African show" was "Treasures of Ancient Nigeria," an exhibition which opened in April of 1982 at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Working daily at the Museum, Mr. Humphrey naturally had ample opportunity to observe and study the various carved figures, masks, and other objects included in the gallery installation. These held a certain fascination for him, and newly inspired, he began a repertoire of carving which continues today.

The two preferred forms which he feels best suit his creative purposes are figural canes and portrait busts. Inspired by the resurfacing images from his childhood, and in tribute to various historical and political figures from whom he has gained inspiration, Humphrey's carving has evolved into a highly personal style, set within the traditions of his earlier southern experiences. The motifs and forms which comprise his carved visions clearly illustrate his individual adaptations and taste; nevertheless, they represent a remarkable continuity with traditional African American folk sculpture from the South.

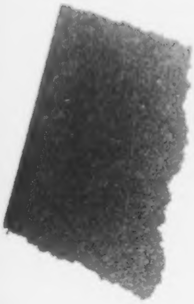
As he carves, Mr. Humphrey determines the compositions and arrangements of the different animal and human forms on his canes, or the individual characterizations included in his portrait busts of notables such as Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, Coretta Scott

King and John F. Kennedy. These decisions are based on his careful observations of "what needs to be" in order to execute the necessary carving and complete the design. While the initial idea for a carving is most often clearly preconceived in his mind, the finished version may vary, being improved and transformed by his creative decision-making and intuition while carving.

Mr. Humphrey carefully selects the woods used in each project, choosing those particularly suited in shape and/or texture to his vision of the finished carving. Fellow workers bring him woods and he gathers supplies upon his regular visits to family members in North Carolina and during visits to New Jersey. While dogwood, oak and cedar are among his favorites for carving, he has also experimented with mahogany, zebrawood and firethorn. He comments that "oak is strong and makes a good cane. Tough to carve. Has to be dry though, green wood splits. Dogwood takes a good color and cedar pine is good to carve."

Using only a pocket knife, Mr. Humphrey fashions the various elements as they appear to him from within the wood. A crook in the grain may become a serpent, a bulge or a knot, an animal or face. He considers his tools carefully, and though basic, they are of great importance. He says, "I can't keep a knife. I just lost a favorite I had five years. Slipped out of my pocket. I can't keep a good knife. Not any knife will do."

When he has completed a carving, Mr. Humphrey smoothes and refines the surfaces and background areas by shaving them broken glass or rubbing them with fine sand paper. In his work, he strives for a smoothness, both



Details of carved canes by Furman Humphrey. Photos: Graydon Wood

as part of his tactile and visual aesthetic and out of a sense of what constitutes the completeness of the canes. On some pieces, Mr. Humphrey uses magic markers and commercial wood finishes to add color, buffing several layers of these colorants into the grain by repeated applications and hand rubbings. He varnishes the final design, or, in some canes, leaves it in its natural unfinished state. The piece is complete when Mr. Humphrey is satisfied that he has let all the details out of the wood, and that no further improvements are necessary.

As noted, a close examination of the lively, stylized patterns and figures used by Mr. Humphrey shows a marked similarity to carvings produced by African Americans in the rural South during the nineteenth and early twentieth century. One of Mr. Humphrey's walking sticks, titled "The Peacemaker," includes human and animal figures interspersed down the shaft of the cane. The figures harken back to his experiences as a youth in North Carolina, illustrating to his mind "how things ought to be." Drawing from a visual memory and using no set patterns for his motifs, Mr. Humphrey's carvings present a marked continuum of these earlier southern African American carved traditional forms. Most striking are the parallels seen between the character and types of simplified natural forms which Mr. Humphrey uses and those found in earlier southern examples.

Walking sticks embellished with snakes, turles, human figures and other naturalized motifs were produced by a number of carvers working within various southern rural folk communities. Canes were indeed a necessity in many areas, used not only to help the infirm negotiate uneven terrain, but also to ward off animal tracks and to clear overgrown pathways.

Some of these earlier functions no longer prevail in the city, but other uses and meanings develop for carved canes. They become a link to the past, to parents, the rural home community, and youth. Highly carved or otherwise ornamented canes have traditionally symbolized respect and authority in many communities. In this regard, Mr. Humphrey's canes represent the preservation of these earlier folk inspirations in the city.

Jack L. Lindsey

Jack Lindsey is Associate Curator in charge of American Decorative Art, Philadelphia Museum of Art and Board Chair of the PFP

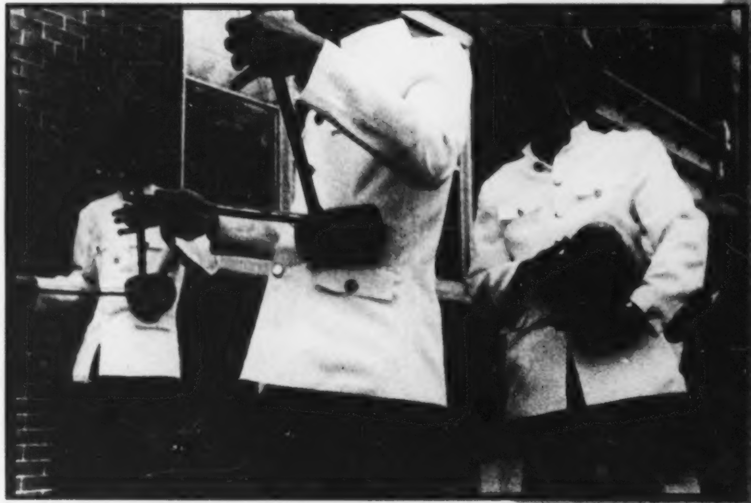
5.

"Bamboo Shoots Grow Up to Be Bamboo": Documenting Cambodian Traditions

Driving through the slush on a winter Saturday morning in South Philadelphia, we make our rounds to pick up young dancers going to a Cambodian classical dance class. Enrollment has grown so that it now requires two carloads to take everyone. The largest contingent of dancers comes from two South Philadelphia neighborhoods, one around the South 7th and Snyder vicinity and the other further west and slightly to the north, around South 17th and Tasker Streets. Another group comes from West Philadelphia, and both cars will drive to Olney, to a small semi-detached house on Fifth Street, where the Cambodian Association of Greater Philadelphia is located. There, in a classroom in the back, the dancers train—toes curled and heads and arms held with great precision—under the direction of their teacher, dance master Chamroeun Yin.

"Mouy-mouy," says Chamroeun Yin over and over to the dancers: "slowly." They repeat their moves over and over again, together in rows of men and women, or alone before the instructor. He cajoles them and gets them to laugh, and at times the conversation in Khmer breaks down into laughter and joking. But soon the careful discipline of the dance resumes, and the North Philadelphia house is transformed into a rehearsal area, filled with majesty and power for a few hours on a cold Saturday afternoon.

The Cambodian community in Philadelphia is the largest Southeast Asian community in the city, and its 10,000 people are scattered



Traditional musicians in the wedding procession for Bunnara Tan and Sithon Priap. Photo: Thomas B. Morton

Sithon Priap and Bunnara Tan during their wedding, October 13, 1990 in South Philadelphia. Photo: Thomas B. Morton mostly through four separate neighborhoods. They came as refugees, from the very earliest who escaped before the Khmer Rouge came to power in 1975 to those who continue to arrive from refugee camps in the last year or two.

The war in the Persian Gulf gives a special relevance to the new Philadelphia Folklore Project undertaking—a project to document Cambodian traditional culture in the city. We are documenting both life histories and the experiences people have weathered as refugees, to capture for the future of the community, and for its neighbors, the real and painful experiences virtually everyone has gone through in the past twenty years. But just as we look at changes wrought by historical events, we are also focusing on continuities: the festivals, rituals and traditions that mark the significant times in our lives. So far, we have attended weddings, parties, classes, and meetings of Cambodian students. We have visited with families, shared meals, and begun to learn about folk and classical and contemporary dance, musical traditions, wood carving, weaving, proverbs, poetry, food and games as well as personal and social history. And we have regularly been part of a carpool which brings students to classes of traditional dance.

The team working on this project includes Wutha Chin, Youen Him, Thomas B. Morton, Prolung Khan Ngin, Rihu Su, and me. We are helped by the generous advice and guidance of Kau Our of the Cambodian Association of Greater Philadelphia, Samien Nol of the Southeast Asian Mutual Assistance Association Coalition, and others in the community. The documentation project is funded by a grant from the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission and the dance class is supported by an apprenticeship grant from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts.

This week's class ends with an impromptu session of social dancing, as a Cambodian man who lives in an apartment above the Cambodian Association comes down, and with his electric keyboard leads the young people in ram vong and kbat dancing. A former youth leader, coach, and traditional musician in Cambodia, Daran Kravanh has taken up the keyboard here instead of his specialty, the accordion, and he looks forward to the day when he can obtain his own instrument and join a musical group to perform at weddings and other social events.

It is Mr. Kravanh who inadvertantly gave a name to the exhibition of photographs of Cambodian traditions that we are planning this March. Talking to Prolung Ngin and me about many kinds of Cambodian literatures and arts, he has begun to write down traditional proverbs, one of which might be translated into English as "bamboo shoots grow up to be bamboo." This, he explains, means that children grow up to reflect their parents and students to reflect their teachers. When we have asked other people in the Cambodian community about the proverb, they have added other meanings. "Children grow up to replace their parents," says Kau Our, adding that "the meaning is that the elder will be replaced by the younger. The young will one day take the responsibility. So, we would like to encourage the young. They are going to take care of everything one day." Chamroeun Yin agrees: "we must teach children about our culture now, so that when they are older, they will know it."

We invite you to the exhibition of photographs from our project: "Bamboo Shoots Grow Up To Be Bamboo": Khmer Traditions in Cambodia and Philadelphia. Including photographs that people have preserved from Cambodia, as well as contemporary images of traditional activities here in Philadelphia, the exhibition will be on display here at the Fleisher Art Memorial, 719 Catharine Street, during the month of March. An opening reception and party on March 1st, from 5:00 to 7:00 pm, will feature performances of traditional Cambodian music and dance by the Koung family and others. The exhibition is a collaboration between the PFP, the Cambodian Association of Greater Philadelphia, and the Southeast Asian Mutual Assistance Association Coalition. We hope you will join us.

Bill Westerman

Sithon Priap enters the house as part of the ceremony during his traditional Cambodian wedding. Photo: Thomas B. Morton

Why People Think Folk Arts are Safe (And Why They Aren't)

This fall, the Philadelphia Folklore Project curated two exhibitions in a new series that placed work by local folk artists on display in Philadelphia's City Hall showcases. When the city's Office of Arts and Culture announced the series, reporters and members of the local arts community immediately asked if this was an attempt to make the "Art in City Hall" program less controversial. Many other statements about the "safety" of folk arts have appeared recently—often in discussions about legislation and policies at the National Endowment for the Arts, which last year underwent a tumultuous process of reauthorization and appropriation.*

Controversies have not yet surfaced regarding the exhibitions that the PFP has curated, but the absence of controversy does not mean that folk arts are inherently safer than any other arts. As the PFP closes our final exhibition in City Hall ("Preserving Traditions" ends March 3, 1991), it is appropriate to consider how our work there relates to current understandings of folk arts.

Consider the following comments in the October, 1990 issue of the national arts magazine, the *New Art Examiner*. Evaluating prospective NEA policies, the Washington, D.C. editors wrote that folk arts are "palatable to even the most conservative members of Congress," that they are "safe as apple pie and . . . a political haven for all involved." They viewed support for folk arts as a danger to "the emerging, controversial and experimental arts and alternative spaces" who may be left "only a few token crumbs" from funding sources. In the same issue, Alice Thorson reviewed an exhibition, "O' Appalachia," which featured works of traditional craft and by visionary artists. She wrote: "in the censorious '90s, folk art may prove the perfect antidote to offensive art." In a local cultural newsletter, the Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance's *Short Subjects*, Carolyn Shapiro grouped together widely different examples of crafts, quilts and folklore, claiming that such forms were, among other things, "palatable to the mainstream."

These examples directly or indirectly imply one or more of the following things: that somehow folk arts have no teeth—that they do not oppose or challenge the status quo; that folk arts are less complex and intellectually demanding than other arts; that folk arts are somehow more popular than other arts, and therefore, less valuable; that support for folk arts represents a (financial) danger to other forms of art.

These attitudes suggest profound disrespect for diverse ways of making art, for traditions of artmaking that are taught and learned among families and communities as well as in degree-granting institutions. If we can move past a notion that folk arts are safe, and move toward understanding some of the dangers of folk arts, we will be taking some necessary first steps toward valuing multiple traditions of art, democratizing the mainstream art world, and creating greater public support for the arts.

Currently, support for folk arts is hardly likely to endanger funding for other arts. Fewer dollars (public, corporate or private) go to folk arts than to other forms of art, even though a very large number of people work in this field. The Folk Arts program at the National Endowment for the Arts is the smallest discipline-based program there. Out of last year's 171 million dollar NEA budget, NEA-Folk Arts had a budget of only 3 million dollars. Of the 12 million dollars that the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts disbursed last year, between 45 and 70 thousand went to folk arts.** Denying dollars to folk arts will certainly not free large amounts of money for experimental artists.

Even more so than the most contemporary artists, folk artists operate outside the mainstream art world. Not only are they seldom funded by (or even aware of) grants, they are seldom included in exhibitions, represented by commercial galleries, or featured in museum and corporate collections. They are rarely even on the mailing lists of art institutions. The world of art schools and galleries has its own brands of exclusion, and traditional artists, like artists of color, are on the outside. (As Howardena Pindell reminds us in the same issue of *New Art Examiner*, the regular exclusion of artists of color from exhibitions is a form of de facto censorship.)

For people who find few representations of their own lives and experiences in mainstream art museums or popular media, the maintenance and creation of traditional arts may be acts of opposition and challenge. Of course, some forms of traditional art (like the arpilleras sewn by Latin American women that document the disappeared) directly oppose the status quo. But it is essential that we understand indirect forms of opposition as well, and acknowledge that opposition may be expressed in many different ways. (For example, traditional singer Bronius Krokys has said that singing hymns in the Lithuanian language was an act of defiance, in pre-glasnost Lithuania.)

To make an informed judgement about the meaning and quality of any art, we need to understand something about the experiences in which the art is rooted. We need to know of the great masters and innovators, the rules (and rule-breakers), the history and aesthetics of the particular tradition. Only then do we begin to understand the art or its makers.

Folk arts are more often described in the human interest sections of newspapers rather than evaluated as art forms, but the absence of folk art criticism does not mean (as Ms. Thorson further suggests) that there are no critical traditions within folk arts. In fact, demonstrating an extraordinary amount of involvement and aesthetic expertise, most people within a local community levy opinions on the works of their traditional artists. Here in Philadelphia, Chamroeun Yin's performances of Khmer dance are evaluated by hundreds of Khmers, who compare it knowledgeably against all the performances they have seen in their lives. Recognition of quality is earned, and given only when it is deserved.

Few of us are fluent in our awareness of the traditional arts of others. Few of us know how to understand or appreciate the folk arts that thrive, a neighborhood away. That is, in part, why folk art funding and presenting organizations around the country (in existence largely because of the exemplary efforts of the Folk Arts Program of the National Endowment for the Arts) try to interpret and support traditional arts inside and outside of their communities. But, the work of representing and translating traditional arts, cultures and experiences is not easy. Nor is it necessarily safe.

In fact, folk art was involved in one of the four highly publicized incidents in the initial "Art in City Hall" program, in 1985 and 1987-8, when works by artists, some already installed and on display in City Hall exhibit cases, were removed because in different ways they offended City Hall politicians. These removals were contrary to established exhibition practice and they, in turn, were offensive to members of the art community.

But the controversy that arose around a photo representing a local folk art form was an even more complex matter. Documentary photographs removed from "Mummery," the tenth "Art in City Hall" exhibition, depicted costumed mummers, painted and bewigged "wenches" celebrating during the traditional Philadelphia New Year's Day Mummers parade. In these black and white photographs, it looked as if some of the painted mummers were in blackface—a practice that has been illegal since 1964 when the NAACP brought a lawsuit to stop it.

Viewers were deeply divided in their responses to this picture. Some felt that showing the photograph was a racist act, and others felt that removing it was an act of censorship. The depth of feelings tapped were testimonies to differences of understanding, and to the difficulties of presenting folk arts outside their own communities of viewers. The controversy showed how a single folk tradition can conjure up and symbolize entirely different histories and perspectives.

The fact that something was folk art didn't make it safe or insulate it from controversy during this City Hall exhibition. Far from it. In fact, since folk arts are so rooted in the specific values and perspectives of the communities they represent, they are potentially more controversial than other forms of art.

Folk arts do not always "translate" well—either into black and white photographs, or into exhibition cases, or across communities. But when they do translate—when the deeply felt expressive traditions of one community are viewed and appreciated by another—then it should be cause to celebrate the widening of artistic and cultural horizons. These all too rare occasions should not be misunderstood as safe choices. Such judgements minimize the achievements of traditional artists and lessen our capacity to learn from one another's arts and experiences.

Debora Kodish

*Recent articles referred to include "Editorial," *New Art Examiner*, 18:2 (October 1990), p. 9; Gallagher, Maria, "City Makes a Case for Folk Art," *Philadelphia Daily News*, August 21, 1989, pp. 39, 42; Pindell, Howardena, "Breaking the Silence," *New Art Examiner*, ibid., pp. 18-23; Shapiro, Carolyn, "The State of the Arts Report: Quilting the Nouvel Americana," (Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance) *Short Subjects* 16:6 (January 1990), p. 5; and Thorson, Alice, "The temptations of 'O' Appalachia'," *New Art Examiner*, ibid., pp. 28-30.

**Figures for NEA were provided by the NEA Folk Arts staff. Figures for PCA were provided by Derek Gordon, Director and represent funds made available through the apprenticeship program ($45,000), through the Local Art program, and provided to the Pennsylvania Heritage Affairs Commission, a state agency.

Announcing a new Artist Aid program for traditional artists

Fabric remnants, leftover plastic strapping, two-inch-thick bamboo, good glossy photographs of a performance, the loan of an accordion, and the help of a driver and car: these are some of the goods and services that have been shared in the last two months, since the PFP began our new **Artist Aid** program. Donations from generous businesses and individuals become another person's treasure: exactly filling the needs of local traditional artists.

Many local traditional artists seemed to be faced with a need for raw materials or tools. We developed the Artist Aid program as a way to bring local people together to respond to traditional artists' needs. Along the way, we began to identify other ways in which relatively modest, and nonmonetary, help could make a tremendous difference in keeping a traditional artist at work.

Artists who need specific art-related materials, supplies, tools, or services are encouraged to apply by sending a letter outlining their request. Applications may be made at any time and PFP staff members are available to help with applications.

Who should apply? We encourage applications from traditional artists who are Philadelphia residents, who have demonstrated mastery in their folk art form, whose work will benefit their community, and who have a demonstrated need. Preference is given to traditional artists who learned their art in a traditional manner, and who represent endangered or under-represented folk art forms.

Chia Ker Lor, Hmong artist, and a mat he has woven of plastic strapping donated by Cyklop Strapping Co. Photo: Sally Peterson

What types of requests are acceptable? This program is intended to provide art-related needs with a value of no more than $250. This includes (but is not limited to) necessary materials, supplies, or tools for work, travel to consult with a master traditional artist, or consultation assistance that will help the artist to continue working. Grants of outright financial assistance are not made.

How to apply. Write us a brief letter, providing the following information: 1) applicant's name, address and phone number; 2) description of the traditional art form in which the applicant works; 3) description of the specific kind of materials or services that are requested; 4) statement about why there is a need for this help at this time. Requests can be made at any time and PFP staff can help with drafting a request.

What happens next. After receiving the letter of request, PFP staff review the letter and talk further with the applicant in order to better understand the artist, art form, need, and significance of the request. We may arrange a site visit. A committee of PFP board members (and others) will assist in awarding these grants. Applicants will receive a response in less than two months. Recipients will be asked to document and evaluate their use of any support awarded.

This program is supported by generous gifts from The Pew Charitable Trusts, Cyklop Strapping Corporation, Paula Colwell, Lynne Lory-Cox, B.J. and David Elder, Jack B. Fabrics, and others. **(If you are interested in participating as a donor, please call us.)** For further information, contact Genevieve Innes here at the PFP: (215) 238-0096.

Upcoming Events

Ongoing (closes March 3, 1991)

Preserving Traditions: Continuities and Changes in Philadelphia Folk Arts, exhibition at City Hall, Broad and Market Streets, 2nd and 4th floors, Northeast Corner, 8:00-6:00 daily. Call us for a free copy of the exhibition booklet. FREE

February 22, 1991

Folklife Grants Workshop. This popular workshop returns this year in an expanded format, 9:00-4:30, here at the Samuel Fleisher Art Memorial, 719 Catharine Street. The workshop is designed to help you plan public folklife projects and learn about funding sources for such projects. Grants officers from funding agencies will explain how their grant programs work. Folklorists will offer skills workshops and share resources. Participants are Christie Balka (PA Humanities Council), Carole Boughter (arts and folklife consultant), Jack Kraft (PA Historical and Museum Commission), Amy Skillman (PA Heritage Affairs Commission), Diane Sidener Young (PA Council on the Arts), and PFP staff. Call to reserve a place and schedule individual appointments with grants officers. The workshop is open to the public. A $5.00 donation is requested, as are RSVPs (238-0096).

March 1-28, 1991

"Bamboo Shoots Grow Up To Be Bamboo": Khmer Traditions in Cambodia and Philadelphia. Photo exhibition. A collaboration between the PFP, the Cambodian Association of Philadelphia, and the Southeast Asian Mutual Assistance Association Coalition. (See Bill Westerman's article in this newsletter.) At the Fleisher Art Memorial, 719 Catharine Street. M-F 12:00-5:00 pm, M-Th 6:30-9:30 pm, Sat 1:00-3:00 pm FREE

March 1, 1991

"Bamboo Shoots Grow Up To Be Bamboo" (above) opening reception. 5:00-7:00 pm. FREE including performances of traditional Cambodian music and dance by members of the Koung family and others.

March 23, 1991

Folk Art Auction to benefit the PFP. At the Fleisher Art Memorial, 719 Catharine Street, Phila., PA 19147. 6:00-10:00 pm. Expect a lively evening, as the PFP presents its first fund-raiser: a folk art auction featuring exceptional works of art from far-flung traditional artists, great finds, curiosities, books and records, memorabilia from famous folklorists, and more. Art at auction will include works by Mexican American artist José Varela, southern folk pottery (including work by the Meaders family), an Eskimo doll by Rosalie Paniyuk, a painting by Scranton artist Jack Savitsky, Jewish birth amulets, Chinese reverse paintings on glass, ironwork from Samuel Yellin Metalworks, a Lachenal and Co., button concertina, a folk game associated with the palio of Siena, a Navajo "Germantown rug," folklore books and records and much more. Watch for more information—and save the date!

Philadelphia Folklore Project Staff

Director: Debora Kodish
Assistant to the Director:
Genevieve Innes
Media Specialist: Jan Greenberg
Folklorists/Researchers: Wutha Chin, Youen Him, Margaret Kruesi, Jennifer Michael, Prolung Khan Ngin, Rihu Su, Bill Westerman
Photographer: Thomas B. Morton

PFP KUDOS

Thanks for the rousing response to this year's membership call. We appreciate the following new and renewing members whose support keeps our basic programs going. Thanks again to Roger and Janet Abrahams, Myer Adler, Rita Altman, Florence Baker, Robert Baron, Jane Beck, Meg Brady and Dave Stanley, Virginia Briscoe, Susan J. Ellis, Mr. and Mrs. Russell Fama, Jake Garrison, Henry Glassie, Kenneth and Rochelle Goldstein, David and Mildred Greene, Lesley J. Gudehus, Germaine Ingram, Thora Jacobson, Clover Jebsen, Jerome and Anne Kaplan, Joseph and Bridget Kasinskas, Thomas S. Kramer, Mike Krippendorf, Bronius Krokys and family, Jane Levine, Meryl Levitz, Lithuanian Folk Art Institute--Philadelphia Chapter, Tim and Diane Lloyd, Mary Lowell, Tim Lyons, Genovaite Maciunas, Eleanor McGlynn, Maija Mednis, Jane F. Medveckis, Richard Myers, Ruth Neubauer, Dorothy Noyes, Polish American Cultural Center Museum, Caroliese F. Reed, Theresa Romanowski, Sherri Sabatella, Laurence Salzmann, Mary Sanger, Avis Scott, Arthur Sherman, Amy Shuman, Delores Steinberg, Gail Stern, Neville Strumpf, Janet Theophano, Kay Turner, Elaine Weiler, M.A. Whelan, and Chamroeun Yin.

For assistance in the last year, we are grateful to the Atwater Kent Museum, Balch Institute for Ethnic Studies, Tracy Baldwin Design, Rose Blumenthal, Jay Cohen, Cyklop Strapping Corporation, Robert Eskind, Patricia Finio, the Folklife Center of International House, Garrison Printers, Glenn Hinson, Germaine Ingram, Nita Innes, Jack B. Fabrics, Catherine Jacobs, Lieberson Inc. Floor Coverings, Thomas B. Morton, Sally Peterson, Pinetree Graphics, Gray Read, Grace Russoniello, Jeannette Toohey, Francis Tucker, Clare Yellin, and Joseph Zinni.

We are grateful to our funders for 1990/91: The Pew Charitable Trusts, the William Penn Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, the Pennsylvania Humanities Council, the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, the Samuel Fels Fund, and CoreStates-PNB

Become a member

$10.00	**Student/fixed income** Receive a year's subscription to *Works In Progress*, our newsletter and special member's mailings
$25.00	**Friend** All of the above and free or reduced admission to PFP events
$35.00	**Family** All of the above for two people at the same address
$50.00	**Supporting Friend** All of the above and a PFP T-shirt
$150.00	**Patron** All of the above and a free publication

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☐ $35 Family ($5 tax deductible)
☐ $50 Supporting Friend ($15 tax deductible)
☐ $150 Patron ($90 tax deductible)

In addition, I enclose ____________ as a donation to the Philadelphia Folklore Project (tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law). Additional contributions to the PFP are invited and welcomed. **Thank you!**

About the Philadelphia Folklore Project

We believe that the diverse folk traditions of our neighborhoods are valuable resources. We are a locally-rooted folk arts service organization committed to the discovery, documentation, interpretation and support of the everyday arts of Philadelphians. We work with people to find ways to keep local traditions alive and vital. Our programs try to increase respect for, and understanding of, various communities' arts and cultures. We work in partnerships with those who practice, preserve and present their own folk arts.

We produce publications, exhibitions and public programs, develop resources, and offer workshops and technical assistance. **Publications** (newsletters, books, videos, monographs and brochures) inform you about local folk traditions. This year's **exhibitions** have included two multicultural folk arts shows at City Hall: *Passing on Traditions* and *Preserving Traditions*. **Resources** currently available include workshops on funding sources, an archive of Philadelphia folklife, technical assistance and consultation services. A *Guide to Philadelphia Folklife Traditions*, a sourcebook on where to find information about local traditions, is forthcoming. For fuller descriptions of our programs, call us: 215-238-0096.

Generous support for Philadelphia Folklore Project activities is provided by The Pew Charitable Trusts, the William Penn Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, Pennsylvania Humanities Council, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, the Samuel Fels Fund, and CoreStates-PNB.

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Winter 1992

A tray of foods for Cambodian New Year (right)—photo by Thomas B. Morton; Danette Huon at an Asian grocery store—photo by Jennifer Michael. See story p. 4

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Translating the Truth, Translating the Law: The Case of *Commonwealth v. Thuy*

We learn in school and in every newspaper we read that Americans are entitled to legal representation, to a fair trial, to an adequate defense. Language should not be a barrier to this.

The case of Aun Thuy, a young man of 29, was brought to our attention by his cousin, Yang Ly, whose wife, Narin Ok, works for the Folklore Project. Aun Thuy was arrested Christmas Day, 1989, after a fight on a South Philadelphia streetcorner in which a white man was stabbed. Today, Aun Thuy sits in Graterford Prison, convicted of first degree murder, even though he is innocent of that crime, as is clear to anyone who has heard the whole story. But the whole story has not come to light in any American courtroom.

Aun Thuy, like so many members of the Cambodian refugee community in Philadelphia, does not speak English. The evidence of his innocence is not always in English, and when it is, the clues that would lead an investigator there are not always markers that someone speaking only English would detect. Because his initial attorney failed to hire an investigator who was fluent in Khmer and English, Aun Thuy's full story was never heard; the full facts of his case were never brought before the jury.

These are the facts as we have heard them: More than a dozen eyewitnesses say they saw Aun Thuy unconscious and away from the streetcorner at the time of the stabbing. Their full story was never entered into the record because no lawyer ever asked if they were there, ever called on them to testify. Ten character witnesses offered to come forward to testify to Aun Thuy's background when they were asked. (He is hard-working, respectful of elders, a good father and husband, and has never been arrested—let alone convicted—for any crime.) But these witnesses hadn't been asked about what they knew until after the trial. Leads about significant pieces of evidence, as well as questions about the credibility of prosecution testimony, were never followed up, because such leads and doubts, though voiced, were voiced not in English but in Khmer, and not in public but in the home. Nor were these matters voiced in the even more specialized cultural language of criminal defense law, a dialect and subculture more rarified even than the legal culture in general.

What those of us who have found ourselves involved in this case have learned is that American criminal legal practice is a cultural system of its own within our larger American culture. It has its own very strict rules of speech, rules of truth, and rules of credibility. (These may be called things like "procedure" and "evidence," and so on). The rules of that subculture define the way that what occurs in the larger culture gets communicated; the rules edit *de facto* what can be talked about and entered into consideration. An expert in that system of legal criminal defense culture can (and must) take the stories that we tell about the circumstances in question and translate them into the appropriate form for judge and jury to consider. Whether we are Cambodian- or American-born, our experiences, as we tell them, are the raw materials of legal argument, and the skilled lawyer is the one who edits that into an argument.

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Aun Thuy deserves a fair trial not because he speaks a different language, but because it should be his basic human right. The ways in which he was denied a fair trial are a result of his not understanding the language or the culture or the legal system.

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For those of us who speak English and are American born, providing that raw material in the most helpful way is a hard enough technique to master—and is nearly impossible without a skilled defense attorney to guide us. But if we speak a different language and come from a different culture? If we don't know what information we are supposed to provide or can provide? Or if our lawyer does not listen, or listens but cannot understand?

We at the PFP, with help from the community organization Asian Americans United, became involved in translating for, explaining to, and assisting Aun Thuy and his family initially because we believed in his innocence. What we have also learned is that because of lack of interest and attention to different linguistic backgrounds and cultural experiences a man was deprived of his right to a fair trial: the strongest arguments in his behalf were never made in court, the evidence lay uncovered, or not decoded. The jury, hearing only the evidence that made it into the court, and only with the evidence that was in English, found Aun Thuy guilty of first degree murder and the lesser charge of possessing an instrument of crime. Motions for a new trial on the grounds of the ineffectiveness—and incompetence—of his first lawyer, and on the grounds of insufficient evidence, discriminatory exclusion of Asian Americans from the jury, and other grounds, were argued in front of Common Pleas Court Judge Eugene Clarke, but were denied. The case will now be appealed to a higher court. Because the family initially assumed that a court-appointed (i.e. free) lawyer wouldn't be very good (otherwise why would such a lawyer be working for free?), or assumed that such a lawyer would lack dedication unless paid to take the case (also cultural assumptions based on prior experience in Cambodia), they have already paid two attorneys their entire pooled savings. The PFP and AAU are helping the Thuy family to proceed with an appeal and to raise the very costly legal fees required.

Aun Thuy (third from left) in his wedding picture.

But the issues come down to this: To the judge and jury, no one made the effort to convey, interpret, or translate all the facts of the case. In fact, no one made the effort to *learn* all the facts of the case. Some of the words—those that were spoken in the courtroom—were translated, but not the truths. The whole truth remained unavailable to the American jury.

To Aun Thuy and his family, the rules of power and law—of custom, and evidence, of what should be told and to whom—were never shown, let alone explained. They were forced to negotiate the complex and perilous terrain of the American legal system with no guidance whatsoever. Their assumptions about how the system worked (based on their knowledge of Cambodian legal systems) proved untrustworthy—but they had no way of knowing this until too late.

Aun Thuy deserves a fair trial not because he speaks a different language, but because it should be his basic human right. The ways in which he was denied a fair trial are a result of his not understanding the language or the culture or the legal system. That system didn't care enough—because he's poor, because he's Cambodian, or because he's poor *and* Cambodian—to make the effort to transcend those boundaries. Language and the intricacies of the legal system were the impediments to a fair trial, but beneath that the ultimate reason why Aun Thuy is in prison is because our culture, ignoring other ways of looking at the world and describing it, and not valuing the lives of people who don't speak the languages of power, neither listens to nor respects them as full human beings.

Bill Westerman

* * *

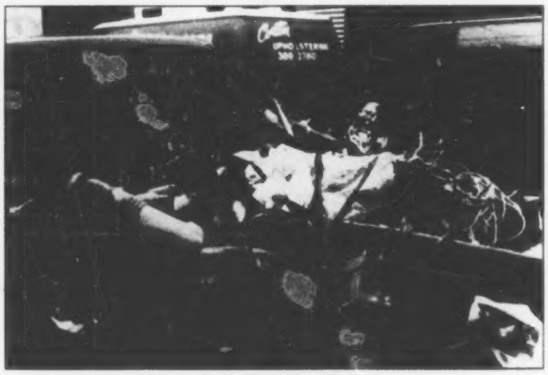
UPDATE

Aun Thuy's case will now be appealed. For more information, or to contribute to the fund for his legal needs, call us at 238-0096.

* * *

Food isn't a meal unless rice is served: exploring Cambodian foodways

Our ways of eating, like many other basic everyday practices, are much more complicated and culturally significant than we may at first think. Folklorists use the word foodways to refer to the whole cultural complex of beliefs and practices related to food, including selection, growing, gathering, preparation and consumption. A close look at the way people eat can reveal much about the wider range of their cultural practices. Questions about ritual uses of food, for example, or ideas about what items are appropriate or inappropriate for human consumption, what elements constitute a meal, or who should prepare food and how, all provide useful avenues for understanding broader cultural patterns. All members of a community have some understanding of its foodways, however incomplete or tacit.



Danette Huon examines vegetables at a produce truck—photo by Jennifer Michael

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So, food seemed a logical point of departure for the team of researchers (Cambodians and Americans) working on our Cambodian Community Documentation Project— a project undertaken in collaboration with the Cambodian Association of Greater Philadelphia and funded by a grant from The Pew Charitable Trusts through the Museums in the Life of a City project. In the last six months, nine of us have visited local Cambodian markets; been introduced to Cambodian gardening practices and produce; discussed important ingredients, seasonings and dishes; interviewed women (and one man) identified as good cooks; taken photographs and made videotape recordings of food preparation; perused Southeast Asian cookbooks; shared food items; collected and recorded recipes; participated in festive meals at the Cambodian Buddhist Temple and in private homes; and written about our observations and reflections. Our writings have reflected both the spectrum of our research and our individual experiences as Cambodians or Americans trying to understand Cambodian food traditions. The following excerpts from our field notes point to a few of the issues raised by our work.

For me, one of the most fascinating and bewildering aspects of this work has been entering into an elaborate system of food exchange, a system whose rules and gender implications I am only beginning to understand.

Danette [Huon] had brought me some fresh white peaches picked that morning from her neighbor's garden, as well as a steamed coconut-and-sesame-filled cake. I had noticed that Danette was exchanging food with Jenny [Harris]. Now, I guess, I am to be included in this system and I need to come up with some ideas of what to make and to share. I thanked her and took the peaches home to my refrigerator; they are delicious. When we stopped at the market area, she said I should try the cake. If I liked it, she would make more and/or teach me to make them.

I am overwhelmed with this food exchange—not only can I not manage to eat all that is in my refrigerator, but I feel humbled by the generosity of all those who keep giving me foods to try. Yesterday, I brought some shortcake for Danette to try. She seemed very pleased with the gift but has yet to try it. I'll be interested to know what she thinks of it. She often tells me that she prefers things made with rice flour, which tends to have a stickier consistency than wheat flour, so I wonder whether she will enjoy this cake—or whether she will tell me if she does not like it. . . .

Yesterday at the Temple, people—friends and strangers—pressed food on me, but not on Bill [Westerman] until the very end, when Mr. Oek Chhouen gave him some. This has happened wherever I go. When I eat somewhere, I am invariably given a packet of food to take home. Danette has also brought items for me to taste: steamed sweet rice cakes filled with coconut and sesame, chicken and vegetable curry. Others have sent me home with spring rolls, a large portion of pork salad, and

Danette Huon at an Asian grocery store—photo by Jennifer Michael *various fresh-picked garden vegetables. When I asked Danette why she didn't take some of the steamed cakes home (I was given an enormous quantity—more than I'll be able to eat), she explained that she knew how to prepare these, but I didn't, so I should take them. They fill my freezer. On another occasion, Danette explained that it was common practice for guests to be sent home with food after a meal, although I never see her take anything home. . . .*

At our team meeting, I asked about our experience at the Temple and my being given food. One comment was that perhaps people thouht Bill and I were together, so giving food to me was giving it to both of us. Theany [Sam] and Wutha [Chin] also noted that Cambodian men don't like to be asked to carry things—women do the carrying—so Bill would not be given food to take with him. As a woman, I was also the appropriate recipient of food because women are generally the food preparers. (Jenny Michael, field notes, October 1991)

While this team's American researchers have struggled to understand the principles underlying Cambodian ways of eating, Cambodian immigrants have had to come to grips with an American food system that is to them equally mysterious. In the following excerpt, Leendavy Koung recounts her early encounters with high school cafeteria food:

I got this long and big thing for lunch (hoagie). I didn't know what it was; it looked kind of funny and hard to eat. I stared at it for so long until everyone started looking at me. I said to myself, "Oh God, how do I eat this thing?" I was thinking of getting the knife, cutting it in pieces, and eating it with a fork. I didn't get to eat it. I was sitting there and staring at it, trying to find the way to eat it until the bell rang.

The next day, I got this funny thing for lunch again. It's some kind of flat thing and it has this white sticky thing on top (it's pizza). This time, I tried to eat it. It's wierd, as I bit it, the cheese wouldn't let go. It kept following into my mouth. I got tired, stopped for awhile and breathed. Then I started to eat again. The cheese was so sticky, I ate all the top, then I ate the plain pizza. I didn't know that American food was this hard to eat. I spent almost a year until I finally learned how to eat American foods. (Leendavy Koung, field notes, "Welcome to America," September 1991)

Vy's reaction to pizza makes all the more sense when one considers that dairy products are practically unknown in the Cambodian diet. In contrast to these "staples" of a Philadelphia diet, rice is the central part of a Cambodian meal. As several of our Cambodian researchers and consultants have emphasized, food is not a meal unless rice is served.

Rice has always been a main ingredient for Southeast Asians. It is hard for an Asian family to find something else to substitute for rice. For Asian families, rice has always been served mainly for lunch and dinner with soups, fried meat and vegetable, khor, and many other courses. . . .

When I was a little girl, my grandparents used to tell me that I had to eat rice to be healthy. Therefore, I was allowed to miss rice and have something else for breakfast only. For lunch and dinner, I had to have rice in order to be rewarded with any special desserts they had. When I grew up, after I had a few experiences of illness for not eating rice, I then began to believe that my grandparents were right. Now even though I am in America, I still have to have rice. Having something else instead of rice doesn't always do a good job for my body. . . .

Some of the Asian kids who grow up in this country may not like rice. They may find other foods tasting more pleasurable than rice. This is because they have gotten used to the food in this country, but for the elders and those who have always liked it, it is hard to change their preference. (Theany Sam, field notes, "Rice is an important nutrient," August 1991)

As both Theany and Vy suggest in their notes, the process of adapting Cambodian foodways to a new setting have posed special challenges for Cambodian immigrants. Ingredients used widely in Cambodia are not readily available here or are available only in processed form. Coconut milk, for example, now usually comes from a can instead of a coconut. Moreover, the exigencies of earning a living have

A tray of foods for Cambodian New Year—photo by Thomas B. Morton.

* * * * *

Cambodian foodways

continued from page 5

forced many people to streamline food preparation: no longer can they afford to spend the entire day cooking. Ingredients like shrimp paste are now bought rather than prepared, and new technologies (blender, food processor) often replace traditional ones (mortar and pestle, coconut grater). These changes have led some community members to evaluate Cambodian cooking in Philadelphia as inauthentic.

Ethnic variations also play a role in people's definitions of authentic Cambodian cooking. For example, our consultants have often made a point of identifying a particular food as being Chinese rather than truly Khmer in origin. On the other hand, while regional variation is recognized, apparently no region is deemed more authentically Khmer than any other. Specialties from Battambong Province, for example, may be unfamiliar to someone from Phnom Penh, but this does not make them any less Cambodian.

Like any collaboration, our work on foodways has been marked by a variety of perspectives and perceptions. Foodways are themselves multiple and diverse: even within a "single" community, different people do things differently. So our work thus far can offer only a beginning, some initial insights into the complexity of Cambodian ways of eating. But this is a critical first step, for we are beginning to understand how to ask useful and interesting questions.

Jennifer Michael, Leendavy Koung, and Theany Sam

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Gospel in and out of the African American Community

With the possible exception of the performed sermon, gospel music is the most pervasive form of Christian religious expression found in African American communities today. From its beginnings in storefront churches in the late nineteenth century, gospel music has been steadily gaining prominence in the African American religious community. Interestingly, the African American religious community's affinity for gospel music represents a dramatic change in attitude toward the music over time, for in the first part of the century gospel music was considered vulgar by many and its performance was not allowed in many African American churches. Though not as commercially successful as secular forms of African American music, gospel has in the 1990s become one of the most often performed forms of music in black communities.

The pervasiveness of gospel in the African American community can be seen in the wide variety of performing groups and venues available. The gospel choir has become a feature of most contemporary African American church congregations and in most churches their dramatic appearances in the Sunday morning worship service are an eagerly awaited event. In addition, a great number of professional and semi-professional gospel groups perform regularly in local gospel concerts, anniversaries and other events. The most recent development in gospel has been the "mass choir" movement. In the last ten years or so, these large singing groups composed of "voices" from various churches and denominations have enjoyed a great deal of success as both commercial recording artists and as community-based performers. For enthusiasts of gospel music, the size and variety of the gospel performing community means that there are numerous opportunities to participate in gospel.

Although gospel performance is associated with gospel choirs and groups, it is characterized by a high degree of audience participation. Because gospel songs tend to be well-known in the African American religious community, the audience frequently sings along with the performers with their encouragement and acceptance. Performers encourage members of the audience to clap their hands, pat their feet, and to generally praise God in their own ways. The participatory nature of a gospel performance reflects the community's understanding of it as a form of African American religious worship in which invocation of the spirit is of paramount importance. As many gospel performers will exhort their listeners: "we can't sing to no cold church." A "warm" church in this context is one filled with a fully participating congregation. In addition, many gospel performers are ministers who use their musical talents as a form of ministry.

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Gospel is often presented differently in nonreligious settings and before non-African American audiences.

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Although contemporary gospel tends to feature large groups, some with over a hundred members, this situation differs greatly from the past. In the early days of the tradition, gospel music was dominated by solo singers and quartets who were well-known in their areas and, in some cases, nationally. Today, few gospel singers perform solo. And gospel quartets have become almost non-existent in

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Reverend Carolyn Bryant
—photo by George A. Butler

grammers focus on the important role that they can play in presenting under-represented forms of gospel. While their efforts may not serve the community as they might like, they nevertheless can serve the tradition in other important ways. As I see it, outside programmers should always envision their efforts as educational as well as entertaining. In the case of gospel, many ethnomusicologists see quartet singing, for example, as the foundation of contemporary gospel. Therefore, in presenting that form of the tradition in programs, programmers have an opportunity to educate people about the history of gospel as an African American musical form.

But often such programmers envision their efforts as preservation, and their perspective is problematic. We might ask: who is preserving what for whom? Whose aesthetics and politics govern choices of what to preserve? How does a preservationist aesthetic effect and alter the performances, images, and identities of performers in the tradition? And, as in any case of cultural intervention, what does the preservation of a real or imagined past say about programmers' attitudes toward present traditions and communities? Outrageous and complicated contortions can result from the encounters of outside programmers' (with their own distinct if ill-informed aesthetics and preferences) with performers working in the older or less often represented forms of music. (In one recent case, traditional artists adopted "costumes" of overalls, rather than wearing suits and ties, in an attempt to give the presenters what they wanted.)

Gospel has not only a long history within the African American community, but it also plays a vital role in contemporary African American life. Although many outside programmers see the presentation of gospel music as a way of bringing African Americans into their programs and institutions, they are seldom successful because of the forms of gospel that they choose to present. As a religious form which gains its meaning and value in African American communities because of shared religious values and sensibilities, gospel is often presented differently in nonreligious settings and before non-African American audiences. This situation should be a reason for more careful consideration of the educational role that such programs can play. In the case of gospel, the educational component should be well-conceived and presented. Audiences can be made aware of the nature of the performances they are witnessing: in terms of musical choice and popularity, religiosity, economics, audience response, ways of presenting and explaining historical and under-represented forms, and motivations and aims of presenters and performers. But before audiences can begin to understand what they are experiencing, presenters must begin to understand how and why forms of gospel music most often presented outside the community differ from those forms presented within African American communities.

John W. Roberts

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John Roberts teaches Folklore and African American Studies at Penn, and is Vice-Chair of our Board. We thank John and Darryl Patterson for helping plan our recent gospel concert featuring the Reverend Carolyn Bryant and the Bryant Ensemble, and the Robert Preston Singers. Eloquent hosts were Maurice Crawford from WNAP, Gospel Highway 11, and Cheryl McClenney-Brooker.

These gifted, thoughtful, and generous people enabled a diverse audience to hear historical and contemporary gospel together, and to participate in comfortable ways. Moving, inspiring, and inclusive, the afternoon helped us appreciate the meanings and uses of "gifts" and the significance of a vibrant locally rooted sacred music tradition.

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Grants Workshop (and news about funding for last year's attendees)

▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ **Don't miss our popular annual Grants Workshop, scheduled for February 19, 1992 here at the Fleisher Art Memorial, 715 Catharine St., 9:00-4:30. The daylong event features workshops, information sessions, and individual appointments with program officers from funding agencies and folklorists. Learn useful information about funding for traditional arts and artists. Hear (and share) creative ideas about how to plan projects and write grants. Share resource materials and join in discussions about the needs of community-based traditional artists and cultural workers. Coffee and informal conversations occur all day. We encourage you to preregister by calling 238-0096; we ask for a $5.00 donation. (Free to PFP members).**

WORKSHOP SCHEDULE:

9:00-9:30 Coffee. Get acquainted. Browse information tables; share ideas and information.

9:30-10:30 Large group session: Hear an overview of funding possibilities for folklife at the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, the Pennsylvania Humanities Council, and the Philadelphia Foundation.

10:45-12:00 Attend one of four small group sessions with program officers from the agencies listed above: Randall Rosenbaum, Diane Sidener Young, Christie Balka, and Jaime Pullen.

10:45-12:00 What is folklore, anyway? Amy Skillman, State Folklorist, Pennsylvania Heritage Affairs Commission will talk about quality folklife programs around Pennsylvania, and show slides about exceptional projects dealing with folk traditions and artists.

12:00-1:00 Brown bag lunch. (Bring your own, we'll provide coffee). Share ideas and information with others. Join us for an open discussion about needs of local traditional artists and communities.

1:00-4:30 Individual sessions with program officers to talk about your specific project. (These sessions must be scheduled in advance: call us to make an appointment at 238-0096).

1:00-2:30 How to organize and produce a folklife program: a workshop on practical details led by Carole Boughter.

1:00-2:30 How to describe your project in a grant: a workshop on writing about folklife projects led by Amy Skillman.

3:00-4:30 Alternate Resource$$ for Folklife Programs: a workshop on alternate sources of funding led by Carole Boughter.

3:00-4:30 Video previews of new PFP slide shows on local traditional artists: come join a discussion about the significance of local folk arts.

PHOTOS BY THOMAS B. MORTON

This page:
Chamroeun Yin, donning headdress, received a grant to teach Cambodian dance to young people.

Left page: Two of his young students learning Cambodian court dance.

Last year, traditional artists and community groups who attended this workshop developed grants that brought in $42,000 in funding for their projects. The Pennsylvania Council on the Arts awarded five grants to workshop participants. Apprenticeship grants (partnerships in which master artists provide intensive instruction to apprentices) went to the following four artists' partnerships: **Furman Humphrey** will be working with **Kenny Brooker**, teaching about wood carving in the African American tradition. **Chia Ker Lor** will be teaching **Yang Bliangkheng Lo** and **Chou Lor** techniques of traditional Hmong basket making. **Chamroeun Yin** will be instructing a group of Khmer students in classical court dance this year, and **Phally Doung** and **Son Ren** will be teaching Cambodian folk dance. The **Southeast Asian Mutual Assistance Association Coalition** received funding to undertake a New Year's documentation project in which researchers and folklorists from the Cambodian, Hmong, ethnic Chinese, Lao and Vietnamese communities work together to document aspects of each community's traditional New Year celebration. Results will include a booklet with essays, interpretive materials for each group's own New Year's celebration, and better knowledge of the arts and artists involved in each observance. Congratulations to all.

Publications & Resources

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PICK FROM SOME OF OUR BEST WORKS

Philadelphia Folklife Resources: A Guide to Local Folk Traditions. Lists 301 groups and individuals who actively present or preserve folk traditions, 102 community-rooted annual folklife events, and more than 1000 different folk art forms (from dance to needlework, gardening to ritual). Special features include a festival calendar, lengthy bibliography about folklore in Philadelphia, and extensive index. Compiled by the PFP. Edited by Jennifer Michael. 1991. xiv + 184 pp. $12.50

Uses of Tradition: Arts of Italian Americans in Philadelphia. By Dorothy Noyes. Foreword by Richard N. Juliani. Describes the many traditional arts that Italian Americans both inherited and made their own. Illustrated. 80 pp. 1989. $15.00. To order: write the Univ. of Penn. Press, P.O. Box 4836, Hampden Station, Baltimore, Md 21211. (Free with PFP membership).

'There Are Other Ways to Get Happy': African American Urban Folklore. By Jerrilyn McGregory. PFP Working Paper #2, 1989. 10 pp. $4

'It's Just Like Being at Home.' The Structure and Style of Folklore in Philadelphia's Family Businesses. By James Abrams. PFP Working Paper #3, 1989. 14 pp. $4

Taking Time and Proceeding With Caution: Time and Process in a Cambodian Life History Documentation Project. By William Westerman. PFP Working Paper #6, 1991. 17 pp. $4

Philadelphia Folks and Their Lore. Educational supplement produced with the Philadelphia Daily News. Articles, games, quizzes, reading lists for elementary and secondary school kids, their teachers and parents. Illustrated, 1989. 16 pp. $3

The Palm Weavers. Introduces the Italian American folk art of weaving beautiful and ornate decorated palm bouquets as part of Palm Sunday observances. Videotaped slide program. 1990. About 10 min. $20

Everything Has to Sparkle: The Art of Fancy Costume Making. Explores the artistry, aesthetics, ingenuity and creativity of mummers' costume-makers. Videotaped slide program. 1990. About 11 min. $20

Blanche Epps: In the Garden of Gethsemane. Introduces the skills, strategies, and savvy of a master urban gardener who turns her Southern African American roots into eloquent "survival skills." Videotaped slide program. 1991. About 8 min. $20

Welcome to America: Arts of Being Khmer in Philadelphia. Explores the transformations of Cambodian arts and traditions in a new setting, with special attention to traditional weddings. Based upon family photographs from local Cambodian families. Videotaped slide program. 1991. 9 min. $20

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PFP Kudos

Thanks to all of you who responded to our membership drive, or contributed your time, energy and ideas to this year's projects. We are grateful to you all: Roger Abrahams & Janet Anderson, Charlie Adams & Kim Tieger, Myer Adler, the American Folklife Center, David Azzolina, Tracy Baldwin, Amanda Banks, Julie Baranauskas, Sharon Barr, Jane Beck, Dan Ben-Amos, Dr. Alan Berg, Michael Bernstein, Philip Bertocci, Stephen Binhak, Margo Bloom, Audrey Bookspan, Marietta P. Boyer, Mia Boynton, Meg Brady & Dave Stanley., Bob Brand, Dr. Morris W. Brody, Wendy Byar, Cathryn Coate, Margie Chambers, Deborah Cholet & Anthony Fisher, Trish Ciliverti, City Lore, Jay Cohen, Maryanne Conheim, Gary Coren, Sam Corenzwit, Maurice Crawford, Elaine Eff, Bob Eskind, Eye's Gallery, Jake Garrison & Garrison Printing, Fante's, Darcy Fair, Mr. & Mrs. Russell Fama & family, George Felice, Patricia & Joseph Finio, Doris D. Fanelli & family, Morris Finkel, M. Finkel & Daughter, Janet Fiola, Janet Fleisher Gallery, Oliver Franklin, Eric Gibson & Jeannie Pearce, James Giltrap III, Mariella Giovanucci Esposito, Dolores Luis Gmitter, Kenneth S. Goldstein, Itzek Gottesman, Ruth Gover, Gran Enterprises, Xan Griswold, Lori Gross, Sandy Gross-Bressler & Peter Bressler, Mary Hazard, Dee Herget, Horror Vacui, Hungarian Apostolate Center, Joyce Ice & Ron Latimer, Indigo, Germaine Ingram, Omomola Iyabunmi, Catherine Jacobs & Fred Oster, Thora Jacobson, Julie & Richard, Pat Jasper, Donald Jones, Suzi Jones, Annette Juncewicz, Deborah Kapchan, Joseph & Bridget Kasinskas, Eve Kazakauskas, Deanna Kemler, Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Deborah Konchinsky, Kate Koperski, Edith Klausner, Lois Kuter, Jack Lindsey, Lithuanian Folk Art Institute, Chia Ker Lor, Andrew Lovatt, Molly Lowell, Frank Madsen, Claire C. Maier, Sandy Martin, Judith McCulloh, Justine McGovern, Felicia McMahon, Darlene Messina, Jennifer Michael, Joseph C.

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Miller, Jr., Margaret Mills, Betty Mongeluzzo, Kathryn Morgan, Skye Morrison, Marsha Moss, Susan Mudrick, Joe Murphy, Susan Naquin, Tracy Nathan, the Now Shop, Ann & John Ollman, the Painted Screen Society of Baltimore, Val Palena, Patricia Pancioli, Ann Park, Darryl Patterson, Marcantonio Pezzano, the Philadelphia Center, Pieces of Tyme, Pinetree Graphics, the Polish American Cultural Center Museum, the Robert Preston Singers, Leonard Primiano, Ralph Rinzler, Theresa B. Romanowski, Caroline Roston, Rt. Rev. Vincent Saverino, Laura Schmucker, Luigi Sera, Suzanne Seriff, Barbara Sheehan, Anne Sims, Lisa Sherman, Small World Imports, Smithsonian Office of Folklife Programs, Ruth Snyderman, Anthony Sorgini, Rev. George S. Spaits, Carol & Willman Spawn, Susanna Spiro, Robert St. George & Gray Read, Josephine & Earl Stamm, Shalom Staub, Mr. & Mrs. Clarence Still, Neville Strumpf, Jonathan Stein, Marni Sweet, Texas Folklife Resources, Ella King Torrey, R. Patricia Trickey, Carmen Valentino, Cathy Von Elm, Karen & Jace Wagner, Chieko Walker, Helene Weis, Sigrid Weltge, Liz Werthan, Bill Westerman, Kate Wilson, Steve Winick, D. Yacek-Matulis, Clare Yellin, Marian Yellin, Samuel Yellin Metalworkers, Margaret Yocom, Katharine Young, & Steve Zeitlin.

And More Thanks: The PFP is supported by grants from The Pew Charitable Trusts, the William Penn Foundation, the Philadelphia Foundation, the Samuel Fels Fund, the National Endowment for the Arts—Folk Arts, PA Council on the Arts, PA Humanities Council, PA Historical and Museums Commission, the PA Dept. of Community Affairs, CoreStates-PNB, and our members. Special initiatives have been funded by the GPCA Marketing Project and the Museums in the Life of a City Project, both programs supported by The Pew Charitable Trusts.

▶**Save This Date:** The 2nd PFP **Folk Art Auction** is set for March 14 here at the Fleisher. More exciting folk art objects from around the country, and even from around Philadelphia, are set to be auctioned in our annual benefit. If you can help, call Jenny Michael at 729-6430.

▶The PFP was one of the ten local groups selected for a site visit by granting officers during the local Grantmakers in the Arts meetings. (We took people for a walk around the neighborhood, introducing them to **dressed windows, Baltimore window screens, Father Silveri** and **St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi,** and the **granita** at **Fante's**. Thanks to everyone for their hospitality.)

▶Don't miss "More Than Just Something To Keep You Warm: Tradition and Change in African American Quilting," an exhibit of African American quilts and photographs at the Springside School in Chestnut Hill (January 24th- March 13th) that draws on photographer and folklorist **Roland Freeman**'s collection and artistry. Some of Mr. Freeman's extraordinary photographs of black expressive life in Philadelphia were seen at the Afro-American Museum during Philadelphia Folklore Month in 1989. The PFP's Jerrilyn McGregory collaborated with Mr. Freeman on that project, which was chiefly sponsored by the Smithsonian.

▶The **Balch Institute** continues to display "America's Living Folk Heritage," an exhibition of traditional arts from around the country, through March. Look for the picture of Philadelphia tap master **LaVaughn Robinson**, loaned by the PFP as an adjunct to the show.

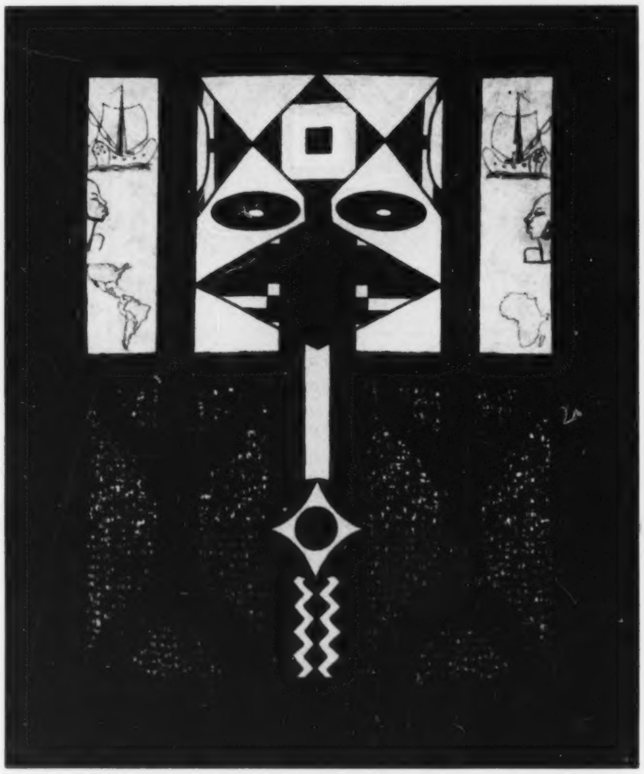

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PHOTO (above)

Mother Africa's Children. Quilted by Vida V. Canady from an original design by Roland Freeman.

▶**Debora Kodish** taught a course in public folklore this fall at the University of Pennsylvania's Dept. of Folklore and Folklife. (Call us for a copy of the syllabus.)

▶Finally, we bid farewell to **Jenny Innes**, who is moving to San Francisco. We appreciated her good cheer and hard work, and will miss her. Best of luck, Jenny.

WORKS IN PROGRESS

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About the Philadelphia Folklore Project

We are a locally-rooted folklife organization committed to the discovery, documentation, interpretation, and support of the everyday arts of Philadelphians. We work with people to find ways to keep local traditions alive and vital. Our programs try to increase respect for, and understanding of, various communities' arts and cultures. We produce publications, exhibitions and public programs, develop resources, and provide workshops and technical assistance. In addition, we offer lively members' events which bring people together.

Become a Member

We're five years old this year— and we're an independent public folklife agency with local roots, scholarly perspectives, activist programs, and a commitment to taking arts and culture seriously. If you value our work, please join us. And tell your friends.

▶ **$1-$10 Student/fixed income.** A donation in any amount will get you PFP news (quarterly news mailings), issues of *Works in Progress*, an invitation to our annual members' picnic, and public thanks— your name printed in *Works in Progress*.

▶ **$25 Individual.** Receive all the above benefits as well as reduced admission to PFP events, your own copy of *Philadelphia Folklife Resources: A Guide to Local Traditions*, 25% discount on PFP publications, and a free set of PFP postcards.

▶ **$35 Family.** (2 or more people at the same address). All of the above benefits, with reduced admissions for everyone at your address.

▶ **$60 Contributing.** Receive all the above benefits, and more of our great books: *Uses of Tradition: Arts of Italian Americans in Philadelphia*, and *Stand By Me*. ($15 tax-deductible)

▶ **$150 Supporting.** Receive all of the above benefits, two folklife posters suitable for framing, your choice of a PFP video, and free admission to our annual Folk Art Auction. ($50 tax deductible)

▶ **$250 Benefactor.** Receive all of the above benefits, an invitation to a special benefactor's meal, and a tour of a private folk art collection. ($125 tax deductible)

The PFP is registered with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as a charitable organization. A copy of the official registration and financial information may be obtained from the PA Dept. of State by calling toll free, within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

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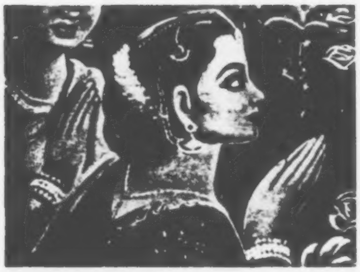
Volume 5
Number 2
Spring 1992

Right: The parade to the river, ODUNDE, c. 1987. Musicians: (l-r) Kenneth Fontleroy, Baba Crowder, Babatunde Olatunji, and John Wilkie. Photo: Thomas B. Morton. See story, p. 2

Below: Detail of Eang Mao's painting of the Birth of Buddha. Photo: William Westerman. See story, p. 4



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At the river, being moved by the spirit during ODUNDE, c. 1982. Babatunde Olatunji presiding. Photo: Thomas B. Morton.

On Sunday, June 14th, the intersection of Philadelphia's 23rd and South Streets again becomes African Market Square, proclaimed as such by masses of Philadelphia's African Americans. A large stage, sitting squarely at the center of the intersection, is the setting for dozens of performances of music and dance. Vendors of every sort of conceivable product and food radiate from the corners of the intersection, lining both sides of the two streets stretching out for a block or two on all four sides of the stage. By afternoon, the marketplace is packed and folk good-naturedly jostle each other, commenting on clothing draped artfully on a burnished chocolate brown body or jewelry hanging elegantly from the ear of a handsome man or woman. For those of us who have visited the urban markets of Africa's major cities, Philadelphia's "Market Square" has the same heady mixture of earnest commerce and a kind of flamboyant humanity which mocks the efforts of locked-butt gentrified interlopers who (to this date, at least) miscalculate the "authority" that their dollars can purchase in trying to shut the Festival down. The real business of the ODUNDE Festival gets underway shortly after noon with a procession to the Schuylkill River to pay homage to the river goddess of the Yoruba pantheon, Oshun, and to receive her blessing. The Festival, now in its seventeenth year, attracts huge crowds of Philadelphia Black folk—from the conservative to the progressive, from integrationists to separatists, from persons deeply committed to African dress to people for whom African dress is regressive.

In "My People, My People," Zora Neale Hurston's eloquently wry kitchen commentary, the celebrated African American woman of cultural letters chronicled the myriad ways Black people celebrate and seemingly compromise a special and very particular expressive genius. Her view, at turns comic if edged with pathos, loving even if viciously acerbic, joyful and caring if uncomfortably denigrating, has troubled many African Americans who have recently rediscovered the writer and who wish Robert Hemenway had not reprinted the piece in his edition of Hurston's fanciful autobiography *Dust Tracks on the Road*.

In the "My People, My People" piece, Hurston flings an elemental notion at folk, all folk, who think they are knowing: there is no ONE TRUTH about Black folk. In fact, the term "variation," when applied to African Americans is admission that the habits and ways of Black folk are dynamic and not static, and oftentimes light-years ahead of the ability of scholars to identify a particular expressive mode as it occurs. Frequently, the dimensions of African American performance are as elusive for the unwary observer as is the close knit interplay between social action and cultural form. If somewhere deep in the souls of Black folk, a primal pulse propels yet another newly invented or discovered "wisdom" to a mode of public performance, then millions of pulse beats daily herald as many "truths" and for an encapsulated moment each person or cluster of persons is bulwarked against some dangerous thing which would tear into her/his core and allow to leech out a precious fraction of one's sense of worth. People must protect against that seepage, and hold inviolable one's essential "gris-gris."

"Performance," as an African American imperative serves that very necessary purpose. The quixotic and pragmatic Hurston stumbled onto that reality and argued that the internalization of the "My People, My People" ethic by Black folk is an historical sensibility and an aesthetic philosophy, even if, in her later years, Hurston seemed to no longer trust her earlier thoughts and observations on the tight integration of African American social and cultural form and expression. But if the mature Hurston was troubled by the essential and expressive performance dynamic so crucial to the health of African American life because it intruded in a "rough" state so profoundly through the chasms and cracks of a fissured America, a youthful Langston Hughes in his elegiac poem "I've Known Rivers," envisioned Black folk as proud accomplished actors on an historically grand world stage.

Black folk who care deeply for the psychic, social and cultural health of millions of kin are impatient to find efficient ways to propagate *The* TRUTH and teach the healing power of knowledge of one's past. Some, like Hughes, fearlessly cloak themselves in the mantle tailored from the glorious threads of ancestors' words and deeds and conceive of projects from a global perspective. Others, feeling comfortable in the more manageable, incrementally reduced units Hurston came to adopt in her later years, opt for a peculiarly limited "American" theatre as a definitive interpretive environment for projects. Fortunately, the festival format offers both sensibilities the right mix of celebration, entertainment, and education, and the possibility of efficiently allowing points to be made about illusive political values such as unity, Blackness, African heritage, tradition, and family and community health. For groups such as the loosely federated Yoruba orisha communities in the US., which manage to harmonize, if uneasily, the sensibilities summarized above, the festival is a "logical" choice for public programs which espouse the positive aspects of selected generic African cultural forms, notably the dance, and music forms in an intentionally specific American context.

Largely unrecognized, the Yoruba orisha communities in the United States, linked through various means to similar communities in West Africa, the Caribbean, and South America, has been increasingly influential in adapting the festival and cultural program format to the long-term interests of African Americans or Africans in America. While some "major" African American organizations have scoffed at the efforts of Yoruba communities to present to African Americans a vision of African cultural form, they have had little trouble attracting large numbers of Black folk to their events who seemed well-pleased by a predictable polyglot of entrepreneurial interests, cultural programming seated in a wide variety of traditional and evolved modes, a general format which tries hard to approximate a generic "African" cast, and a near-magical, celebratory atmosphere which turns urban neighborhoods in reunion spaces.

I am not aware that these sponsored events are intentionally proselytizing, but in selective numbers young African Americans are exploring the offerings of Yoruba religious communities. Those who seriously decide to become Yoruba priests and priestesses study assiduously for many years before they are admitted into a practicing community. So well-regarded are some of the American Yoruba communities, by Nigerian, Cuban, and Brazilian fellow practitioners, that I am told a paramount chief from Nigeria was recently buried at Oyo-Tunji, the fully functioning residential Yoruba village in South Carolina.

So the ODUNDE Festival of African Culture in America, now in its seventeenth year, is not simply a bunch of folk "playing African." The belief is strong that Black folk in the United States and the "New World" are Africans in a Diaspora who are reclaiming traditions lost to current memory, but potentially available through programmed reawakenings, such as festivals. This singular notion—that African Americans are an historically disoriented people in whom knowledge of the "old ways," traditional values, beliefs and forms of expression, need only to be reawakened to lay claim to full psychic health—is powerfully at loggerheads with categories of art separating artistic revivals from traditional forms. And herein lie some of the special truths of the ODUNDE Festival—and kindred events which fill public spaces in vital demonstrations of power and kinds of Blackness. ODUNDE doesn't enforce a single version of Blackness; its seventeen years of endurance are powerful antidotes to the verdicts of institutions, theories, models and definitions which try to render limited single and over-simple truths. Hurston recognized that "something deep" was going on in peoples' various "readings" of identity. With thousands of others, we can recognize that something deep is going on in ODUNDE.

Unknown flute player, Odunde, c. 1983. Photo: Thomas B. Morton

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—Gerald L. Davis

Dr. Davis, Folklorist, and Associate Professor and Chair of Africana Studies at Rutgers, writes eloquently on African American verbal art and folklore. His book, I Got the Word in Me and I Can Sing It, You Know, *explores the art of African American preaching. A committed observer of grassroots cultural traditions, he is involved in current rethinkings of the meanings of African American experiences and expressions.* ***For information about ODUNDE*** *(June 14th, 1992, 10:00 am–8:00 pm, at 23rd and South Streets), call 546-4879. The PFP is collaborating with ODUNDE to research and write about the history of antecedents to this Festival. See story, p. 10.*

"To Put Kind Feelings in the Heart": The Paintings of Eang Mao

There is a word in Khmer, Eang Mao the artist tells me in his small apartment one evening, a word about values, specifically the kind of values a teacher hopes to instill in the students. *Youkchethtuokdakk,* he tells me, translating it as roughly meaning "to do with care," "to pay attention," "to be diligent and serious," "to put kind feelings in the heart." That's what he hopes to do with any apprentices to whom he teaches painting, and those are some of the values he hopes to pass on to his five sons.

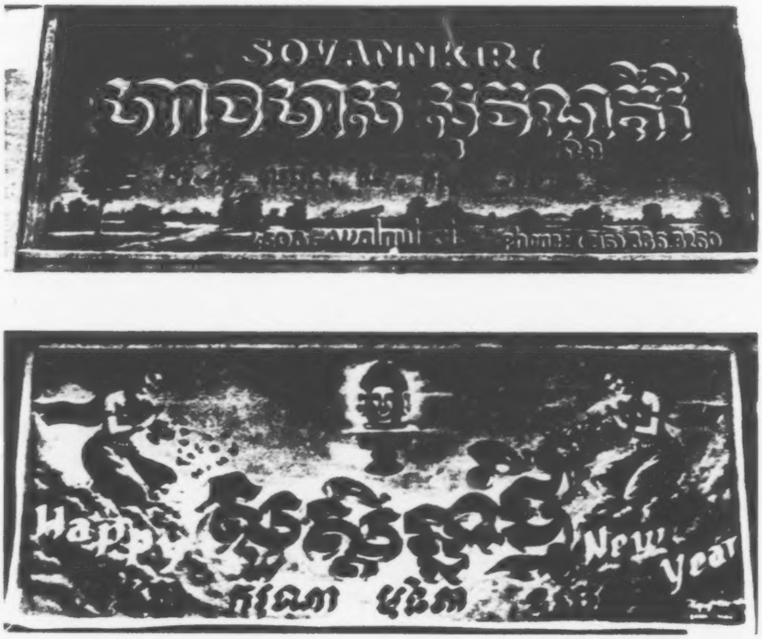
His apartment, doubling as his studio, bears the combination of old and new. In a bedroom off to the side, a canvas mural of the birth of Buddha covers one wall, so large that the top is scrolled up and tied. Sketch pads and drawings litter the room. On the bed are charcoal drawings he has done for a class at Community College of Philadelphia where he is an art major. Along the wall of the kitchen rests a large slab of wood—a future sign for a small Cambodian business in partial completion. Cans of paint line the floor, a full range of blues from dark to light. The wooden surface of the board is marked in chalk, where Khmer and English characters will be placed.

Eang Mao's painting is all about values—about struggling to hold onto our values even when we change the place where we live. Sometimes keeping a culture alive goes beyond maintaining a tradition. Often it means using innovation and creativity to keep those values alive, to beautify the new environment around us, and to instill a sense of diligence and seriousness in the hearts of younger people.

Any visitor to the Palelai Cambodian Buddhist Temple at Third and Greenwich Streets will see the prominent altar wall mural behind the large statue of the Buddha at the front of the temple. The bright oranges, yellows, and greens in the scene from the death of Buddha, the delicate features of the faces, all seem to be part of a perfect reproduction of the sacred iconography of Theravada Buddhism. Depicted in popular prints (the designs originating in India, the prints usually made in Thailand), they decorate most Buddhist temples, as well as most Khmer homes in Philadelphia and Cambodia. A hand-painted version of one of these scenes is considered highly desirable. Artists may draw on a fixed repertoire of some twenty to thirty images: subtle changes and difference in coloration, light, and execution allow an artist some stylistic expression and distinguish a master painter from one less accomplished. Those paintings considered "better" by local community aesthetics are often more realistic and exact in their depiction of human forms, facial features, vegetation, clothing, jewelry, and light and shadow.

Here is where Eang Mao excels. His people look more human, and are more appealing to the Khmer aesthetic of a better executed religious painting. His subtle adaptations include making the facial features more "Cambodian" by darkening the hues of the skin, broadening the nose and some of the facial bone structures, and changing the eyes. He also adapts the flowers and leaves to reflect Cambodian wild flora.

Eang Mao comes by his understanding of Buddhist painting from years of apprenticeship in a Buddhist temple in his homeland. Born in the village of Phnom Touch (literally, "small mountain") near Battambang in northwestern Cambodia in 1958, he attended public school for four years until he turned sixteen. At that point, his parents, small farmers, sent him to become a monk, a traditional way for young men to further their education and develop character in Cambodia. In 1974, until the Khmer Rouge takeover of Cambodia in April 1975, Eang Mao lived with the monks, observing their painting, calligraphy, and related arts, practicing and refining his craft on his own. Such images of scenes from the life of Buddha were the most common painted sacred



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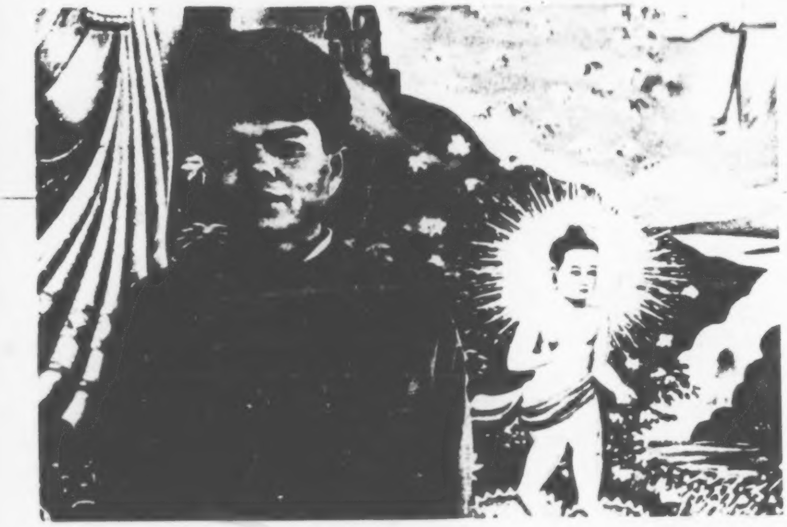
Two signs by Eang Mao, 1992. Photo: William Westerman



Eang Mao and a detail of the birth of Buddha, 1992. Photo: William Westerman

images, but monks also painted proverbs on the walls, literally, in different versions of elaborated calligraphy. The proverbs—some short, others much longer like poems—were a traditional means of education, teaching younger monks the values of Buddhism and the sacred language of Buddhism, Pali. Eang Mao would observe these painted proverbs, and return to his room to practice the technique on his own every night. He learned the lettering technique that way. "I just watched. They painted that on the walls and when I went to my room I would draw that again and again," he recalls in Khmer, during an interview with Wutha Chin and me. "If I forgot when I went home, I would go back to the temple the next day." He also learned the art of papercutting from an older monk: another way of illustrating proverbs by cutting foil or paper in the shape of Khmer letters, then affixing them to fabric.

The Khmer Rouge tried to stamp out active Buddhism and all its vestiges during their three year rule. Such painting and arts were suppressed, and Eang Mao hid his talents. An older brother, whom he credits as being an even better artist, was killed, along with five other siblings and their father. Young Eang survived, and made his way to the Khao I Dang refugee camp. There he came to know an older painter and art teacher, Ki Saroeuch (who now lives on the West Coast, he thinks) who taught him some of the finer points. "I watched him draw," Eang Mao remembers, "He taught me how to mix the colors. Cambodian people, when they know something, it's not easy for them to tell you. They had a celebration and I went to his home, and it just happened that he introduced me to his techniques."

In the camps he also recalled the movie posters he had seen in Cambodia, recreating their iconography and coloration. "For a modern picture you can create anything—different kinds of color and shadow—it doesn't matter as long as it looks good." In contrast, for "a religious picture you have to use specific colors, exactly draw the same as what it is. It's more like a picture of a true story and you can't change it. You can only change a little what you are allowed to draw." As he learned from nature posters and movie posters, he also began to paint secular scenes in the refugee camp, such as landscapes, and tried, in his words, to educate himself.

If you drive up South Seventh Street in Philadelphia, from Porter to Tasker Streets, you can't help noticing Eang Mao's personal gallery: a collection of hand-painted business signs that adorn all sorts of establishments from jewelers and laundromats to video repair shops, groceries, and even doctors' offices. The lettering on these signs is in Khmer and usually English too (and sometimes Chinese and Thai); the calligraphy developed from painting proverbs as a young monk in the temple. The color and shadow are a result of practice in the temple and the refugee camp, the nature scenes from pictures, posters, and memories. An occasional cobra or Apsara spirit come from Cambodian nature and religion, but the coloring is all Eang Mao's, as is the combination of the old motifs and the new forms, the traditional and the mercantile, the Cambodian with the Philadelphian.

The signs brighten the neighborhood, but also mark South Seventh Street as distinctively Cambodian, the calligraphy a reminder to the recent arrivals that someone speaks their language. Mekong, Koh Kong, Pailin, Pursath—these have meaning beyond being the names of markets. They are markers, and each name calls forth a stream of associations, the folklore of geographic memory.

Eang Mao's work is a handmade addition to the popular culture of the neighborhood and to the landscape of the city. Though he has on his own developed the painting of the signs, his innovations draw on traditional forms of landscape, calligraphy, and symbols from Cambodian culture, including religious and spiritual life, animals and plants, history and geography. It is an extraordinary example of the uses of the repertoire of traditional forms and motifs, combined with mass culture images, to produce a highly functional yet aesthetic component of neighborhood life. It is one way that the values taught to a young monk in Cambodia in 1974 enrich and beautify the life of this city nearly twenty years later.

—William Westerman

The story of the wolf and the shrimp

Koung Peang in a lakhon costume. Photo courtesy Koung family.

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January 15, 1992. One evening, after my family ate dinner, we were talking about people and animals with big and small bodies. And people were saying that those with big bodies might be strong outside and have a lot of energy, but they might not have much of a brain. It's like they could not think very well. To say it another way, people and animals with the biggest bodies might not be very smart. After we were talking about that, my father Koung Peang started to bring out the story about the wolf and the shrimp: Once upon a time, in the Kingdom of Cambodia there lived a starving wolf. During the driest month of the year, he was thinking about how he could catch some fish to eat. He came to one of the lakes in which almost all the water was dried up: there was just a muddy puddle left. In the mud there were lots of fish, lobsters, crabs, and snails. The wolf was very happy to see them. He thought he was really in luck.

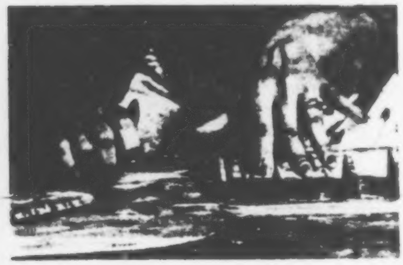
A particularly clever shrimp guessed what the wolf was thinking about, so to outsmart him, the shrimp said: "You shall eat all of us but if you eat us at this moment we won't be as tasty as we could be." The wolf replied, "So how can I make you good to eat ?" "You must carry us so we can wash in the clean fresh water," said the shrimp. "But how can I carry all of you to wash in the clean fresh water when there are so many of you?" asked the wolf. The shrimp replied: "Well, just do what I say and it will be quite easy for you." The wolf promised to do whatever the shrimp told him. "Just come and lie down here," said the shrimp, "and roll in this mud. Then we will all jump on your back and grab onto your fur. You can take us to a river or lake— somewhere with plenty of clean and fresh water. You can wash us all, and then you can eat us up to your heart's content."

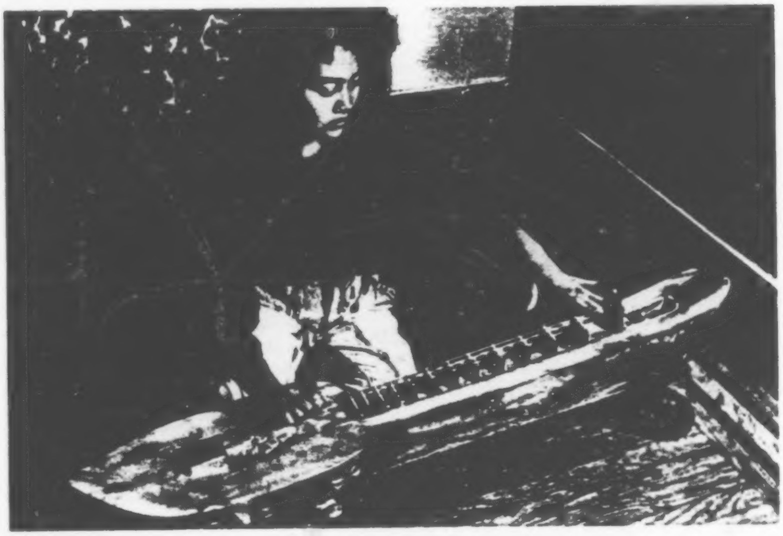
So, the wolf who was both greedy and stupid did just as the shrimp told him. The fish, the shrimp and all the others collected together to clutch on to the wolf's fur. The wolf went trotting off with them to a large lake with clean water. He went right down into the water, and the fish, the shrimp and the others all jumped off into the lake calling out: "Now go and get the rest of the animals." The wolf went back and collected all the remaining fish, the shrimps, the crabs, the lobsters and the water snails, and the stupid wolf brought all of them to the lake. As soon as he got them to the edge of the lake, they also all jumped off his back and dived down into the deepest water, where the old stupid wolf couldn't reach them. After that, he knew that the shrimp had tricked him, and he was very angry.

The stupid old wolf was just furious. He decided to go and collect all the land animals, both large and small, to come and help him get revenge. He called the elephants, the rhinoceroses, the tigers, the cattle, the pythons, all the other snakes and birds, asking them to come and help him empty the water out of the lake, so that he can finally catch all of those animal in there and eat them all up.

The pythons and the snakes formed themselves into a great big dam to stop more water from coming into the lake. All the other land animals began to bail out the remaining water. The water animals realized what was happening and got very frightened. "We will be in trouble," they said, "if all the animals do not stop emptying our lake." Then a smart old carp got up and addressed them. "I have heard that Judge Rabbit is a very wise animal who knows how to help people and animals out of their troubles. I will set off to fetch Judge Rabbit to get us out of this trouble." The water animals agreed and at once send the carp to ask for Judge Rabbit's help. So the carp went wriggling off.

It was dark and he knew that he could only walk until day-time, when his scales would begin to dry out. Luckily, he bumped into Judge Rabbit, who stopped and said, "Brother carp, where are you going?" The carp was very happy to see Judge Rabbit, so right away he said to him, "Judge Rabbit, all the fish, shrimp and the rest of the water animals are in trouble and only you can help us out. They sent me to come find you and implore you to help, because we heard that you are very wise, can judge great issues, tell right from wrong and can help anybody out of the trouble. The elephants, buffaloes, all the cattle, the rhinoceroses, the deer, the antelopes, the pigs





Leendavy Koung playing the takhe, 1992. Photos: Jane Levine

and all the other land animals plus all kinds of birds have all come to bail the water out of our lake to dry it up so that they can catch all of the water animals and eat us up. Even the snakes are forming themselves into a great barricade to dam up the water. Judge Rabbit, take pity on us and help us out of our troubles. Just assist us this once and we will always sing your praises. We will always remember the good deeds of Judge Rabbit, and we will never forget your kindness for the rest of our lives," said the carp.

Judge Rabbit listened carefully to the carp. As the carp finished talking to him, he said, "Brother Carp, go back to the lake and tell all the animals in the lake not to be afraid. I will help them out of their trouble." So the carp returned to the lake. The next morning, Judge Rabbit went to the edge of the lake. He saw all the land animals right there trying to empty the water out. Then he set down and thought about what to do.

Then he knew. He picked up a large leaf and he pretended that there were letters on it, and that the letters were heavenly messages send to him to read to all the land animals. He made it sound as if it was very serious. Then he yelled "Intreathireach, [one of the chief gods in heaven] had sent me this message to read to all of you. Intreathireach will surely send lightning and thunderstorms to kill all of you unless you stop emptying this lake."

When the animals on the land heard the message, they were very frightened. They were so panicked that they started to run off in all directions, tripping and falling over each other, terror-stricken, trampling each other down. The elephants, buffaloes, rhinoceroses and deer began to tramp on the big snakes that were forming the dam to hold up the water. They trampled the snakes to bits, so that the dam suddenly broke and the waters that were held back poured out. All the animals in the lake were free, and all the land animals were killed. They felt into the water as food for the fishes.

Since that time, all the animals respect the wisdom and cleverness of the animals who saved their lives And they all look up to Judge Rabbit.

—Leendavy Koung

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This story is from fieldnotes produced during our Cambodian Community Documentation Project, a joint project of the PFP and the Cambodian Association of Greater Philadelphia, supported by a grant from the Museums in the Life of a City project of the American Association of Museums, funded by The Pew Charitable Trusts. We will be including this and many other traditional stories told locally in our forthcoming resource volume on Cambodian culture.

For more Khmer tales including animal stories and legends, see Sam-Ang Sam and Patricia Shehan Campbell, Silent Temples, Songful Hearts: Traditional Music of Cambodia. *Danbury, Ct.: World Music Press, 1991.*

On folklore and multiculturalism

Cultural diversity and multiculturalism mean many things to many people these days. Opponents complain that multicultural projects will destroy a "common culture," contribute to a "Balkanization" of America, lead to ceaseless demands by disempowered minorities who want their own curricula, result in a lowering of standards, and effectively destroy "quality" education.

These arguments need to be countered with an understanding of culture, and a discussion of relationships between power and knowledge. We need to ask whether there is a common culture after all. (I would argue that there is not.) We need to explore how to bridge the enormous gaps among our different understandings and experiences, how to address ways in which people have been "written out" of history, textbooks, and policies, and how to deal seriously with the fact that there are many kinds of standards, many notions of quality in our world.

Multiculturalism provides a way of acknowledging and exploring the world from differing perspectives—of acknowledging the multiple experiences that indeed make up our world.

Multiculturalism is founded in a powerful truth: no education, no history, no views of the past or analyses of the present, no arts, no theories are neutral. All learning and opinion are rooted in particular perspectives. And we can learn to think and teach more critically—in fact, better—if we consider how the world (or our pronouncements about it) look from the points of view of others.

Anthropologists and folklorists are accustomed to viewing culture as a dynamic and almost protean concept: as a product of peoples' changing, contradictory, often contested values, beliefs and practices. A wide variety of views constitutes a "single" culture. (Consider, within your own family, the variety of views and opinions held regarding any significant event. From the perspective of an elderly woman, a young child, etc., the world simply is different.) Consequently, we all develop and produce varying versions of culture. Nor is culture something that is stable or frozen: we remodel and transform our cultures, responding and reacting to people and events, incorporating some new ideas, rejecting others. Add to this a further complication: most of us participate in several cultures, developing our own identities and sharing traditions in relation not only to our ethnicity but also to our occupations, peer or age groups, gender and religion.) Serious attention to diverse cultural traditions includes serious attention to the diversity within and across cultural traditions.

Herein lies the greatest virtue of—and in fact, the essential need for— multicultural approaches. Multiculturalism helps all of us explore how we define self and other; it helps us to actively examine the meanings of our own experiences. It allows us to write ourselves back into the record—but also to critically examine (and respect) the experiences of others. Multiculturalism does for culture and ethnicity what previous movements did for class and gender: it teaches us to question our basic assumptions, and correct fundamental distortions of the record caused by limited or skewed perspectives. When people began to look at history from "the bottom up," from the viewpoints of common people (rather than so-called leaders), and when people began to look at women as central actors in history, amazing things happened to the historical record: a more complete record emerged, as well as radically different understandings of what was important, of the impact of certain events, of the negative and positive results of various actions.

In these ways, multiculturalism is essential to advancing our understanding of the histories in which we are all implicated—and of the future in which we all have a stake.

Talking about Afrocentricity and the need for a true multicultural (rather than a monocultural) curriculum, Molefi Asante speaks of establishing a system that is pluralist without being hierarchical. He rightly observes that what we have now is an educational system which effectively reproduces systems of domination—and he plainly states that it is not possible for an African American to go through our current educational system without becoming insane. If insanity means a separation from one's self, then we all are encouraged in insanity as long as we are not taught to explore our own complex histories, to look beyond the limits of our own experiences, and to piece together how our experiences intersect with those of others.

Multiculturalism is founded in a powerful truth: no education, no history, no views of the past or analyses of the present, no arts, no theories are neutral. All learning and opinion are rooted in particular perspectives.

In education—but also in history, law, public policy, and art—we have tended to assume that our institutions are neutral. We have tended to deny the fact that all people have not had an equal

Publications and Resources on local folklife

voice in shaping these instititutions. To make our institutions more equitable, we need to ask fundamental questions about how experience, history, and knowledge are shaped, recorded, and transmitted. For education—and any other institution—are simply not "value-neutral" systems.

And that is why folklore is so important in any discussion of multiculturalism, in any attempt to link classroom and culture. Folklore—peoples' collective knowledge and art—represents a counter-institution, a way of representing alternative views, perspectives, understandings. Like any other information, it must be evaluated and considered: but folklore is a powerful reminder that institutions do not exercise total control over peoples' psyches, spirits, memories, visions or wills. And exploring peoples' folklore is a first step toward acknowledging and exploring the complex cultural traditions that everyone of us carries into the classroom and through life.

—Debora Kodish

This essay is excerpted from "Multicultural views: traditional gardens, palm-weaving, Khmer arts and mummery," a 25-page booklet developed to accompany a series of brief videotapes prepared as resources on the cultural diversity apparent both inside and outside Philadelphia's classrooms. The booklet includes introductions to four videos on local folklife, a few suggestions for further reading, and transcripts of the videos themselves.

Books/pamphlets:

Uses of Tradition: Arts of Italian Americans in Philadelphia. By Dorothy Noyes. Foreword by Richard N. Juliani. Describes the many traditional arts that Italian Americans both inherited and made their own. Illustrated. 80 pp. 1989. $15.00. To order: write the Univ. of Penn. Press, P.O. Box 4836, Hampden Station, Baltimore, Md 21211. (Free with PFP membership).

Philadelphia Folks and Their Lore. Educational supplement produced with the Philadelphia Daily News. Articles, games, quizzes, reading lists for elementary and secondary school kids, their teachers and parents. Illustrated. 16 pp. $3

Stand By Me: African American Expressive Culture in Philadelphia. Roland Freeman., Glenn Hinson and Jerrilyn McGregory. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Office of Folklife Programs, 1989. 32 pp. Photographs and texts. FREE with membership.

Working Papers:

There Are Other Ways to Get Happy': African American Urban Folklore. By Jerrilyn McGregory. PFP Working Paper #2, 1989. 10 pp. $4

'It's Just Like Being at Home:' The Structure and Style of Folklore in Philadelphia's Family Businesses. By James Abrams. PFP Working Paper #3, 1989. 14 pp. $4

Taking Time and Proceeding With Caution: Time and Process in a Cambodian Life History Documentation Project. By William Westerman. PFP Working Paper #6, 1991. 17 pp. $4

Multicultural Views: Traditional gardens, palm-weaving, Khmer arts, and mummery. Essays on local folklife, with transcripts of videos, introductions, suggestions for further reading and an introduction commenting on multiculturalism and folklore. 25 pp. $4

Videos:

The Palm Weavers. Introduces the Italian American folk art of weaving palm bouquets as Palm Sunday observances. 1990. 10 min. $20

Everything Has to Sparkle: The Art of Fancy Costume Making. Explores the artistry, ingenuity and creativity of mummers' costume-makers. 1990. 14 min. $20

Blanche Epps: In the Garden of Gethsemane. Introduces the skills, strategies, and savvy of a master urban gardener who turns her Southern African American roots into eloquent "survival skills." 1991. 9 min. $20

Welcome to America: Arts of Being Khmer in Philadelphia. Explores the transformations of Cambodian traditions, with special attention to traditional weddings. Based upon photographs from local Cambodian families. 1991. 9 min. $20

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Please make checks payable to the Philadelphia Folklore Project.

Mail to: PFP, 719 Catharine St. Phila., PA 19147

A CHALLENGE TO US, A CHALLENGE TO YOU

We've just received a Fundraising for Social Change Challenge Grant from the Philadelphia Foundation. That means that all donations that you make to the PFP this year will be matched by this special grant. Lead the way, contribute now, and help us reach our goal of raising $5,000 in new contributions! Help us by sending a donation, making a pledge, and spreading the word about the PFP and our work to your friends. (You can use the form on the back page of this newsletter). If you have been receiving this newsletter, we especially hope that you will support our efforts. Board members have already generously raised $2,100 towards our goal. Special thanks to: Germaine Ingram, Thora Jacobson, Mark Lecher, Ann Ollman, andClare Yellin. Thanks also to Jovida Hill of the Black United Fund for her terrific counsel and to the Philadelphia Foundation for their support.

Roots of ODUNDE

As soon as this year's ODUNDE festival (see pp. 2-3) turns to memories, the PFP will begin working with Lois Fernandez, members of the ODUNDE board, interested South Philadelphians—and all of you who are interested—to document the festivals and traditions of African Americans in South Philadelphia since 1945. Much has been written of historically Black South Philadelphia, of the preeminent institutions and significant individuals rooted in these neighborhoods. Our interest is in exploring (and ultimately in writing a history of) the gatherings and arts that have nourished peoples' souls and reflected their creativity. South Philadelphia has long been a nurturing ground for many African American traditional art forms. It becomes critical for all of us—native South Philadelphians, newcomers, African Americans, Philadelphians—to know the history of how community has been knit by successive generations of imaginative individuals. We're especially interested in peoples' memories of community festivals (Halloween parade; Daddy Grace Parade), gatherings, and contexts for dance (shout floor at the House of Prayer for All People, house parties for tap, street corner tap contests, public dances, balls, clubs, cabarets): these are ways in which people kept in touch, reflected on experience, actively shaped community, and created memorable arts. Recent discussions of South Street seem to begin the area's history with the in-migration of largely white artists in the 1960s: this summer's work is intended to begin a fuller and longer history of the neighborhood. Thanks to a Winnet summer internship from the Samuel Fels Fund, folklorist Nomolanga Dalili will join the PFP staff and begin identifying people to be interviewed. We're delighted to be undertaking this project in collaboration with ODUNDE and invite those of you with ideas or an interest in the subject to contact Nomolanga at the PFP office 238-0096 or Lois Fernandez at ODUNDE: 546-4879

Aun Thuy Update

Since our last newsletter, there has been considerable progress on Aun Thuy's appeal. His attorney, Jules Epstein, has filed motions calling for a new trial, based on the presence of several crucial pieces of evidence and several other grounds. Meanwhile, Aun Thuy remains in Graterford prison serving his life sentence. He speaks no English, and Khmer language books are expensive and not readily available. He would appreciate letters of moral support. Letters in English can be sent to the Folklore Project and will be translated into Khmer. Send letters to Philadelphia Folklore Project, attn. Wutha Chin, 719 Catharine St., Philadelphia, PA 19147.

Great Workshops!

Forty people attended our grants workshop this spring. PFP staff are following up with technical assistance to exciting projects proposed by several organizations: Asian Americans United (an apprenticeship in Cambodian painting), the Hmong Association (an apprenticeship in a form of musical poetry: *kwv txhiaj hmoob*), Lao Association (apprenticeships in traditional dances), ODUNDE (research on African American festival traditions in South Philadelphia). and Southeast Asian Mutual Assistance Association Coalition (documentation of New Year traditions). Our workshop on representing folk culture drew about forty teachers and community activists who watched PFP videos, and talked with traditional artists and one another about racism, sexism, complicated realities underlying folk arts, and ways to deal seriously with the culture that students bring into classrooms. Powerful statements made it a memorable afternoon. Thanks also to PATHS/PRISM for co-sponsoring the workshop. Call us for information about resources produced for both events: 238-0096.

Folk Art Auction

Hurrah! Our second Folk Art Auction raised more than $11,000 for the PFP's community programs. The preview party featured wonderful foods (prepared by PFP Board members Germaine Ingram, Ann Ollman, Clare Yellin and Jack Lindsey) and the mellow doo-wop harmonies of Rick and the Masters. Auction-goers had a chance to check out the 200+ objects for sale at the live and silent auctions. Humor, drama, and intensely competitive bidding punctuated both auctions: we were especially proud that the works of some local traditional artists were purchased for museum collections. Thank you all for coming; special thanks to the traditional artists and auction committee who worked so hard to make the event a success.

Milton Jews with some of his canes. Photo by Jane Levine.

* * * * *

PFP Folks

We toast the recent successes of PFP members, staff, and board: Milton Oliver Jews' carvings were exhibited in the Art in the Armony show. Furman Humphrey demonstrated carving to an appreciative audience at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. "Blanche Epps in the Garden of Gethsemane," our brief video produced with Mrs. Epps by Jan Greenberg was featured in "Women Pictures: Four Works by and about women" in WYBE-TV's "Through the Lens 2" celebration of independently-produced multicultural film and video. Leendavy Koung made a powerful presentation to students at the Franklin Learning Center on Khmer folk arts. Jane Levine goes off to Texas this month, where she will work for our sister independent not-for-profit folklife agency, Texas Folklife Resources, shooting an exhibition on Texas artists. (We'll welcome her back this fall!) And congratulations to PFP staff (and ex-staff) who are new graduates: Avis Scott (BA, Univ. of Virginia) Jenny Harris (BA , Penn), Jerrilyn McGregory (PhD, Penn) and Dorothy Noyes (PhD, Penn). And we're especially delighted that board member Germaine Ingram, whose clarity, energy, imagination and dedication have been so enriched our work, is being publicly acknowledged: she is honored by the Bread and Roses Community Fund for outstanding volunteerism, as part of the Women in Struggle awards this year.

Furman Humphrey (on right) works with apprentice Ken Brooker. Photo: Nancy W. Wright

* * * * *

PFP Kudos

Thanks for recent support to: Ross and Carol Albert, Ann Beresin, Moyra Byrne, Anthony Falatico and Dean Metzler, Jenny Harris, Lloyd Walter Howell, Susan Isaacs, Thora Jacobson, Milton Jews, Mark Lecher, John Mayer and Family, Juanda Myles, Prolung Khan Ngin, Bonnie and Mal O'Connor, Ann and John Ollman, Cheri Owen, Carol Parssinen, PATHS/PRISM: The Philadelphia Partnership for Education, John Patterson, Maralyn L. Polak, Claudia Reese and Phil Martin, Judith A. Shulimson, Gwynne Sigel, Paulette Singleton, Surihu, Bill Westerman, Robert Wood, Clare Yellin. We are grateful for recent grants from: CoreStates-PNB, the Samuel Fels Fund, the Philadelphia Folksong Society, and The Philadelphia Foundation. We appreciate continuing support from The Pew Charitable Trusts, NEA-Folk Arts, and the PA Council on the Arts. Our special thanks to State Senator Vincent Fumo.

* * * * *

Philadelphia Folklore Project Staff

Director: Debora Kodish

Folklorists/Researchers: Wutha Chin, Nomalanga Dalili, Jenny Harris, Leendavy Koung, Jennifer Michael, Prolung Khan Ngin, Narin Ok, Surihu, Bill Westerman

Photographers: Jane Levine, Thomas B. Morton

WORKS IN PROGRESS

PHILADELPHIA
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Philadelphia, PA 19147

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About the Philadelphia Folklore Project

We are committed to paying attention to the fundamental ways in which people organize, understand, and share their experiences and knowledge…. We consider that our ways of expression—our symbols, rituals, arts and stories—are our most basic ways of representing our own truths and perspectives, our most fundamental ways of exploring our own experiences and, ultimately, a powerful means for controlling our own destinies.

We're five years old this year—and we're an independent public folklife agency with local roots, scholarly perspectives, activist programs, and a commitment to taking arts and culture seriously. We assist artists and communities, conduct research, develop exhibitions, offer public programs, workshops and technical assistance, maintain an archive, and issue publications and resources. If you value our work, please join us. And tell your friends. Thanks to a Challenge Grant from the Philadelphia Foundation, the dollars you donate or pledge will be matched by additional donations.

Become a Philadelphia Folklore Project Member! Help us with our challenge!

- **$1-$10 Student/fixed income.** A donation in any amount will get you PFP news (quarterly news briefs to members only), issues of *Works in Progress*, an invitation to our annual members' picnic, and public thanks.
- **$25 Individual.** Receive all the above benefits as well as reduced admission to PFP events, your own copy of one of our books Philadelphia Folklife Resources: A Guide to Local Traditions or *Uses of Tradition: Arts of Italian Americans in Philadelphia*, 25% discount on PFP publications, and a free set of PFP postcards.
- **$35 Family.** (2 or more people at the same address). All of the above benefits, with reduced admissions for everyone at your address.
- **$60 Contributing.** Receive all the above benefits, and one more of our great books: our *Guide*, *Uses of Tradition*, or *Stand By Me*. ($15 tax-deductible)
- **$150 Supporting.** Receive all of the above benefits, two folklife posters suitable for framing, your choice of a PFP video, and free admission to our annual Folk Art Auction. ($50 tax deductible)
- **$250 Benefactor.** Receive all of the above benefits, an invitation to a special benefactor's meal, a tour of a private folk art collection, and our eternal gratitude! ($125 tax deductible)
- **$500 Angel.** Receive all of the above benefits and a framed photograph of an image from the PFP archive. ($250 tax deductible).
- **PLEDGE:** I wish to pledge $______ per month to the PFP.

The PFP is registered with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as a charitable organization. A copy of the official registration and financial information may be obtained from the PA Dept. of State by calling toll free, within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

Yes, I support local folklife!

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WORKS IN PROGRESS

Volume 5
Number 3
Spring 1992

Special
Exhibition
Issue

Right: The Conga Lesson. Piró, from Ponce, shows a Philadelphian how it should be done. Photo: Thomas B. Morton

AMERICAS FIRST
SLAVE SHIPS

Banner by Eric Joselyn at demonstration; June 17, 1992. Photo: Bill Westerman

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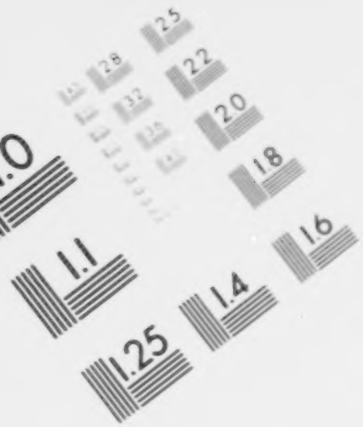
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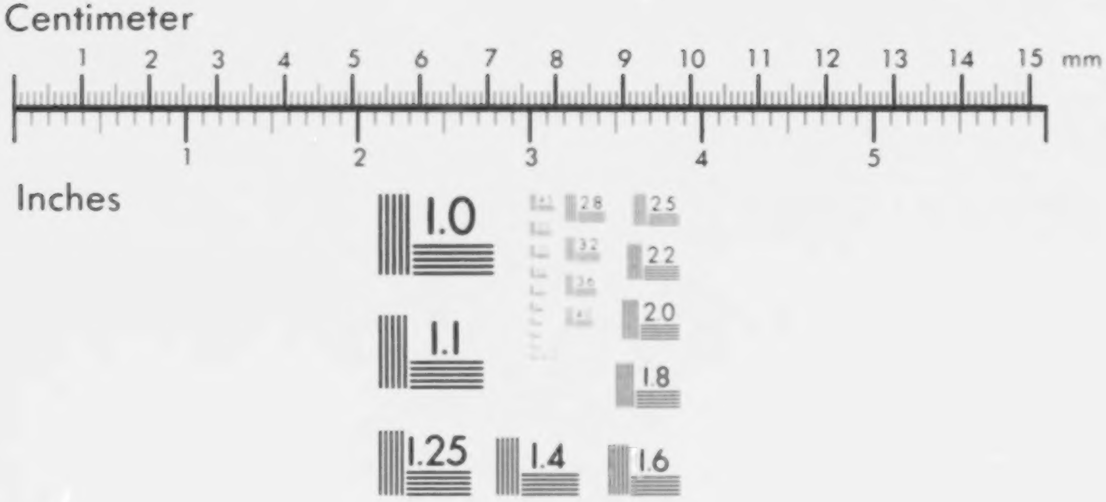
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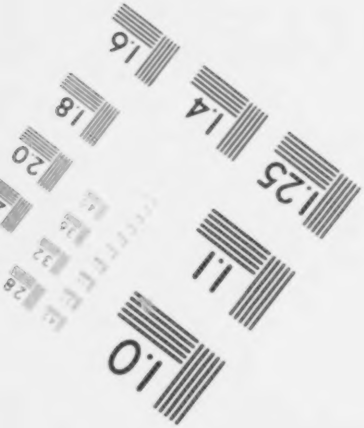
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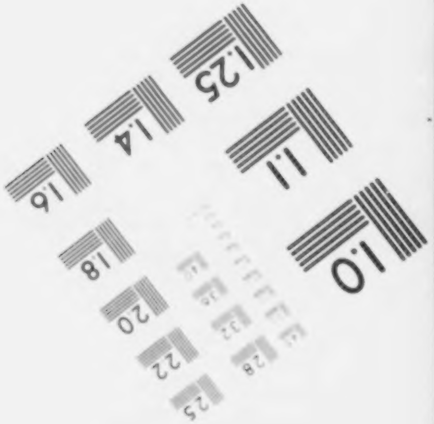
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Columbus, Myth, and 500 Years of Resistance and Survival

On June 17, 1992, replicas of Christopher Columbus' ships sailed into Philadelphia as part of official Columbus Quincentenary celebrations. There to greet them were a half-dozen canoes, piloted by The Unwelcoming Committee. (Members of the Committee to Counter the Myth of the Discovery, an outgrowth of the Stop the Name Change Committee which had worked to prevent Delaware Avenue from being renamed after Columbus). The demonstration, which lasted about five hours also included a march. Speakers represented, among other things, the homeless here and the popular movement for peace and justice in El Salvador. People at tables provided information on Puerto Rican independence and on anti-racism coalitions. Haitian dancers and musicians performed in support of Haitian refugees and a return to democracy in Haiti. Ceremonial drumming honored the survival and dignity of Native Americans. Overhead, red ribbons decorated with names of each of the original Native American nations dangled from tree branches. Among their messages: that Columbus should not be celebrated because he was associated with the enslavement and murder of Native and African peoples, that 500 years of racism and exploitation are enough. Their action was a simple way of dramatizing that 1992 also marks 500 years of resistance and survival of indigenous peoples. One Philadelphia newspaper editorial writer characterized the group as "screaming meemies," and complained that they were ruining the party. (He wanted to see the 15th century replica cannons turned on the canoes). The violence of his response is a reminder of how threatening it can be when civic myths are challenged.

COLUMBUS
WAS NO
HERO

Banner by Eric Joselyn at demonstration, June 17, 1992. Photo: Bill Westerman

Myths are narratives that we believe. They explain how things began, and why they are, expressing basic beliefs and tenets—things held to be unquestionable and absolutely unchallengeable. They are tremendously useful ways to organize histories, retain values and pass them along to others. But because myths are accepted at such basic, deep levels (whether or not they are found to be historically accurate, which can be a separate point) people who call myths into question challenge not just a story, but social order, human and natural relationships.

Virtually every American—North, Central, Caribbean, and South—knows in some form the story of Christopher Columbus' discovery of America. It becomes sort of an organizing story about how the history of the world arrives at where we live. As such, it has become the prototypical origin myth for Europeans in the Americas, for with the notion of "discovery" also comes related attitudes about that first contact. As the myth is handed down, Columbus is admired for heroism, bravery, intelligence, foresight, perseverance, and for his spirit of adventure. What followed is seen—and promoted—as a uniformly good and inevitable thing; the hemisphere is understood to have afterwards filled with immigrants (like a "vacuum," John Winthrop said in the 17th century), bringing the benefits of European and Christian civilizations. And yet, Columbus' connection to non-English speaking, Italian and Latino cultures itself challenges the myth of Anglo-Saxon, landowning Founding Fathers. As such, it seems worth celebrating.

But myth always runs the risk of being promoted as a sanitized, anniversary spectacle, particularly when government funding and an interest in tourist dollars is involved. In these cases, myth can be used to perpetuate the ideology of the dominant society, and to marginalize dissent. Single myths alone don't help us understand the complexity of history, or the tragic legacies of the past.

Concurrently with the Columbus myth, from the moment of contact, there have been other versions and other recordings of the way history took place and played itself out. From the Spanish priest Bartolomé de las Casas in the 16th century to the Quiché woman Rigoberta Menchú in the 20th, people have told numerous other stories of the "New World." The American land mass was the home of highly developed civilizations with distinct languages and literatures, complex religious systems, laws and democracies. People from these civilizations have their accounts, still in active oral tradition.

Columbus (who mentioned "gold" more than 140 times in his diaries) was out to find India to make money by any means possible—including conquest, theft, and slavery. The Columbus voyages

Don't CELEBRATE
500 YEARS of

Ceremonial drumming at demonstration, June 17, 1992

Photo: Bill Westerman

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were part of an attempt by Ferdinand and Isabella, in a race against other European powers, to conquer and govern the world. The age of "exploration" was rooted in assumptions about the superiority of one economic system over others, one language and cultural system over others, and one religious belief system over others. 1492 was not only the beginning of European expansion, but the beginning of intensive cultural colonization of indigenous peoples. It marked the expulsion of the Jews and Moslems from Spain. It led to the enslavement and trade of African peoples, who have also provided their own accounts.

In many ways, those stories that counter and challenge the myth of the discovery have been dangerous stories to tell—and even more dangerous stories to act upon. Those who have questioned and confronted the power and control of invaders have been brutally cut down: Aztecs, Incas, Lakota, and Cheyenne and others in previous centuries, thousands of Pipiles and Mayans in El Salvador and Guatemala in this century, and individuals from Túpac Amaru to Leonard Peltier.

Other stories are preserved in the memories of Americans, and they are also charters for action. This autumn, numerous local groups, among them activists, artists, and people of color, are working to "counter the myth of the discovery," as one committee has aptly put it. It is not accidental that projects to counter the myth have been undertaken by people whose everyday activities involve struggles for social justice. Counter-Quincentenary events link the present to the past. Instead of reaffirming myths that perpetuate inequity, they challenge them, making the connection between 1492 and contemporary struggles: for land rights and governmental status for indigenous peoples from the Arctic to Amazonia, for democracy in Haiti and support for Haitian refugees, for environmental safeguards, against US support of oppressive regimes in Central America, against racism at home and apartheid abroad.

Janice Cauley of the Committee to Counter the Myth of the Discovery notes that over 5,000 Native Americans live in Philadelphia alone. Lumbee, Cherokee, Powhattan, Lenape, Halawa-Saponi, Navajo, Eastern Delaware peoples are here; most have African and European ancestors, as well. After 500 years of forced acculturation, their struggles to define and preserve identity are ongoing and complex. It is, Ms. Cauley notes, "a struggle in the city to stay in touch with your values and beliefs." Activists this fall remind us that 1492 cannot be safely contained in our history books, and that our symbolic forms—myths, stories, celebrations, demonstrations—are connected both to our struggles and our dreams. We all inherit complex histories. We all have a choice about the dreams we acknowledge, and the struggles we join.

— Bill Westerman
Debora Kodish

Some local organizations can provide further information: Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), 1213 Race St., Phila., PA 19107-1691 (215-563-7110) has produced a 1992 Racial Justice Packet *including an annotated bibliography, and list of more than 100 organizations, coalitions and resources for alternative observances. The United American Indians of the Delaware Valley, 225 Chestnut St., Phila., PA 19106 (215-574-9020) has information about events, and offers ongoing programs year-round. Numerous calendars and resource guides listing national events are also available, for example, Karin Morris, ed.* 1992 International Directory and Resource Guide: 500 Years of Resistance. *Published by the South and Meso American Information Center, PO Box 28703, Oakland, CA 94604 (510-834-4263) Call us (238-0096) for a list of resources and publications, and for names and addresses of other local groups planning counter-Quincentenary events this fall.*

Looking at photographs by Thomas B. Morton

Photos: Thomas B. Morton

Gazing at a lyrical image of a Latino couple embracing, Julia Lopez commented with pleasure, "We never see pictures of us like that in the paper. Instead we see negative images or pictures of the extreme emotions of our people." When he saw an African American drummer circle a young boy with his arms to show him a way of playing the instrument, Thomas B. Morton recognized how he had been taught in other times and other places. Morton is an African American photographer who has for the last eighteen years maintained an intense personal interest in, and at times, an extraordinarily intimate involvement with people from the African American, Latino, Korean, and Southeast Asian communities of Philadelphia. The twenty-five photographs that comprise "You, Me and Them," an exhibition of his work on view at the Samuel S. Fleisher Art Memorial this September are a combination of Mr. Morton's deep understanding of his own culture, and his real commitment to understanding others. These are unlike pictures that we usually see. But they are pictures that we may recognize.

The moments of intimacy and discomfort that one experiences in this exhibition are both results of the mutual respect that made these pictures possible, and of the subtle understandings (also developed over time) that Mr. Morton seeks to convey. Some photographs are occasioned by catastrophic local events—the burning of Osage Avenue after the Move bombing, the stoning of a Cambodian Buddhist Temple— while others document quiet, private moments in a family's life. The majority of photographs explore festivals, celebrations, rituals, and performances, and these images are indicative of the depth and dynamism of traditional culture in Philadelphia. But unlike more conventional documentary or ethnographic photography, Mr. Morton's emphasis is seldom on conveying information about "things."

Instead, there is an overall effect of directing our attention away from surface understandings regarding genre of art, type of occasion, or depictions of "culture" or group identity and towards examination of relationships among people (as underscored by the

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So Yun with her father Young Jeon, 1988

Left: Pedacito de patria (A Little Piece of Home) dancers before a performance of Puerto Rican folk dance, c. 1981

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Stones thrown in anger held by a Cambodian Buddhist Monk. 1990

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exhibition's title: "You, Me, and Them"). This includes attention to relationships among people represented in the photographs, to relationships between viewers and those at whom we gaze, and, of course, to the relationships that Morton has with the people represented and with us.

The way that the photographs are grouped in the exhibition encourages these meditations. Two comfortably familiar portraits show Korean women absorbed in brushing hair, and applying lipstick. Morton has framed each image so that it appears to be a solitary portrait, but in each a single telltale "extra" arm is present—the only trace of other women who are also there, wielding a hairbrush, applying lipstick. This is a strategy that Mr. Morton uses often: he invites our recognition of familiar and repeated acts only to challenge or deepen that sense of recognition. The most disturbing images in the exhibition contain elements of confrontation from which Mr. Morton doesn't release us. Elements of background are ambiguous or confusing, confounding recognition, and amplifying rather than resolving the discomfort in the images: a Khmer Buddhist monk stands, eyes downcast, holding in his outstretched hands two stones just thrown at him in anger by residents of his South Philadelphia neighborhood. A man stands before burnt-out ruins on Osage Avenue: he holds in his hands his street number, the last identifiable vestige of his home. It is a measure of Morton's seriousness and finely-tuned sense of irony that he provides ambiguous points of respite: the only photograph in the exhibition in which no people appear shows the smoking ruins of Osage Avenue after the MOVE bombing. The photographs themselves sometimes force us to see things that simply don't make sense.

On other occasions, Morton takes things that might not make sense and uses visual touchstones—gestures and occasions that are at least partly recognizable and familiar— to make them more

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The Ancestors Speak. Babatunde Olatunji and a woman at South Street Bridge. ODUNDE, 1988 accessible. He sometimes underscores this formally, composing his photographs in ways that open the boundaries of a frame and let us in: an extended leg and an arm in two different photographs of Korean friends and family relaxing on a couch serve this function. A number of photographs capture the intense self-directed energy of groups of people engaged in public ritual, protest and performance: their self-containment highlights the energy and engagement that people acting together have in common, while conveying a sense of intimacy and integrity shared by each group. Even when we see people in public settings, we see them in moments when they are entirely engaged. These images maintain the spirit of the moment.

Even Morton's performance shots are made intimate—either because we are looking at the performer as seen by someone else on stage (in the two images of "Spirit of Sankofa" in performance), or because we are given an opportunity to witness the performer in a moment of intense contemplation or preparation before what we conventionally think of as the "actual" or "main" performance occurs. Mr. Morton thus expands our understanding of what counts as performance, and continues to push us to surprising insights about traditional arts and ritual.

Especially eloquent are a series of portraits in which people seem to have defined themselves by their actions, and especially by the literal laying on of hands. A young couple embraces, a young boy concentrates on his reflection in a mirror, holding a can of hair spray in the arc of an arm, a Yoruba priest reaches out, blessing a woman moved by the spirit, a family stands arms entwined, and a man playfully holds up a rooster. Here the reach of a drummer's arms around a young child quietly defines both space and self, along the way reminding the viewer of Henry Ossawa Tanner's

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So Yun at 9, with her mother Jee Sue Kim, 1985

Photos: Thomas B. Morton

Preparation for Khmer folk dance, Khmer New Year, 1988

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"Banjo Lesson" in composition and spirit.

The quiet nod to Tanner, and the attention to light throughout (especially light that seems to come from within people) in this context seems to be less about appropriation or reference, than a comment on the persistence of patterns: of relationships among teachers, of moments of engagement when people are fully themselves, of triumphs of the spirit.

Like noted African American photographers Roland Freeman and Jack Franklin, Mr. Morton takes as his subject ordinary people: their extraordinary and ordinary moments, their involvement in movements (cultural as well as social) for self-determination, their means of defining themselves. Also like these artists, Morton's life and work are intertwined, and the degree of his involvement in peoples' lives adds to the complexity of his images and to the range of moments that he is able to see. Thus, the paradox that this exhibition is filled with photographs that both seem familiar and challenge our sense of familiarity.

—Cheryl McClenney-Brooker
Thora Jacobson
Debora Kodish

YOU, ME AND THEM:
Photographs by
Thomas B. Morton

September 8– October 8, 1992.

The exhibition is located in the
Marian Locks Studio Gallery of the
Samuel Fleisher Art Memorial,
719 Catharine St., Philadelphia,
Second floor.
Exhibition hours:
Monday-Friday 11:00 AM-5:00 PM,
Monday-Thursday 6:30-9:30 PM,
Saturday 1:00-3:00 PM.
FREE admission.

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Please join us

at a public opening reception
on September 8, 1992,
5:30-7:30 PM.

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An exhibition organized by the Philadelphia Folklore Project. Supported by grants from The Pew Charitable Trusts, the Philadelphia Foundation, the Samuel Fels Fund, CoreStates, the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, and our members. Call us for information about tours: 238-0096.

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Members of the Greater Philadelphia Overseas Chinese Association at New Year, 1983

So Yun and friends, 1988

My Neighbor,
Cookie's Mother

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Photographer's Statement

I don't know why I even shoot, other than I just can't help it. A fundamental curiosity and concern, I think, drives me to photograph.

This group of photographs is a selected retrospective of sorts. The exhibition from which this handful of photographs is drawn includes 25 individual leaves from a visual journal of thousands of exposures I have made off and on throughout the 1970's and 1980's and up to this day. These particular photographs were selected partly because they were available (I shoot much faster than I am able to develop and print). They were all taken in Philadelphia. They make up a broad visual cross-section of some of my experiences here over the years.

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"News Media Stop Inciting Racist Violence" Demonstration, c. 1990

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ignorance of some on others. On a daily basis, I may also witness some wholly simple and pure act of kindness or simple consideration. I try to photograph all of these types of encounters.

I attempt to avoid the stereotypical in my image-making while constantly questioning my own assumptions about myself and who I am photographing and why I have certain images already in my head.

I do not consciously document anything. If anything, I attempt to preserve those everyday moments I consider beautiful and full of humanity. I do not intend that either "news worthiness" or "exoticism" have anything to do with these impact of these images. Whether the subject is "posed" or completely "unaware" of me, I have little to no control. I feel I "am

given" rather than "taking" photographs.

The moment of framing and making a single photograph is an act of separating a moment from its natural context. This ambiguity, I feel, makes the image accessible to those unfamiliar with the subject matter.

On a basic level, it is not important to me that you know exactly what is going on in a photo. It is important that you are attracted to the image and can stand and contemplate it and perhaps contextualize it on your own terms (without needing to explain or respond.) It is important that each image can stand on its own. I would hope that these photographs simulate new questions in the viewer rather than provide answers to old questions.

The reasons I photograph anything at all are complex. It is not my profession ***per se***, nor is it a mere hobby. My background includes drawing, printmaking, painting, and the like. I love these things but drawing is too slow and my life is too fast. Photographs are also especially familiar and accessible to people.

The order of the photographs in the exhibition is intended to enhance and diversify the viewing experience. I wish to focus attention on and share aspects of the subjects outside of the more traditional groupings by race, ethnicity, activity or mere chronology. The threads that bind depend on what questions or answers you bring to the exhibit.

—Thomas B. Morton

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Resident of 6238 Osage Avenue the day after May 14, 1985
Photos: Thomas B. Morton

We sat on the floor watching "The Killing Fields" on a tiny color TV hooked up to a professional video editing machine. I thought about the movie and the implications of watching it side-by-side with a Cambodian refugee, someone who was not just seeing "The Killing Fields" but who had survived them: the forced labor camps and the famine, the capricious killing, the wars both before and after the Khmer Rouge regime, the forced evacuation of the cities. Of course I also thought about the implications of being an American, watching an American-made, American-written film about the survival of Cambodian people in that period when the reaction to the US-sponsored war and the US invasion provoked a rural uprising in the form of the Khmer Rouge. Vannthan Ouch sat next to me, watching the same film (which he had urged me to rent and bring over), but seeing it through different eyes: as someone who had lived through it, obviously, but also as an artist learning the technique of motion picture for the first time, making the transition from canvas to video, in order to represent his experience and his worldview in a way for others to see.

He was born in Phnom Penh in 1963, and his early memories are of the bombing and war that led to the 1975 Khmer Rouge takeover. What he didn't witness himself was often described to him by his father, a paramedic for the Red Cross. During the months prior to the Khmer Rouge victory, his parents were able to make arrangements for him to leave the country. But the 11-year-old boy decided to stay through the New Year's celebrations in April and that decision sealed his fate. In April 1975 the Khmer Rouge marched into the capital and forcibly relocated everyone. People died on the roads during the evacuation, they died in the camps from summary execution, they died—like his brothers and sister—from lack of food and medicine, and they died during perilous escapes to the refugee camps in Thailand. After the war, he returned to school, eventually attending Phnom Doun Penh University and the School of Fine Arts in Phnom Penh, where he specialized in painting. He also studied drafting, carving, and other arts. In spare hours he practiced painting, wrote poetry, and taught older people in some of the city's poorer neighborhoods to read and write.

We first met at the Cambodian Buddhist Temple at New Year's in 1991, when Mr. Ouch and his friend and associate Sarun Yann were videotaping the three-day service for the monks. I introduced myself, and was pleased to learn that Mr. Ouch had been a painter in Cambodia. Weeks later he invited me over to see his photo album. It contained only photos of paintings he had made in the Khao I Dang refugee camp in Thailand. The paintings themselves had long ago been sold off to visitors and refugee workers around the world. At the time the paintings had been a source of extra income; before that they had been a career. From one visit to the next, he unfolded a life story for me—not in linear fashion like a carefully edited literary memoir, but cinematically: each vignette, each conversational flashback to be edited into the larger picture like a sequence of film. In our telling and trading of stories we would repeat, go back, go forward, go over and fill in, cut and edit, light and shoot again from different angles.

When he arrived in Philadelphia in 1988, Mr. Ouch began to paint, but he soon discovered video, and it became a passion. He began shooting street scenes, weddings and ceremonial occasions with Mr. Yann. They used borrowed equipment, learning basic technique from other Cambodian videographers, then refining their skills and developing their styles. Cambodian wedding videos are created in a community: different artists view each other's work, and are aware of different techniques and approaches. Videographers are competitive and often critical. Mr. Ouch,

for example, prefers constant innovation and uses special effects to keep his work from being "so boring." He takes pride in the fades and dissolves, split screen, stop action, and, above all, two-camera shooting and editing process that distinguish his productions.

Mr. Ouch spends long hours experimenting with new post-production techniques, light and sound. He rents Khmer-dubbed Indian and Chinese films at local video stores (available in Cambodia during the 1980s) and learns their technique, studying them frame by frame. He is equally a student of MTV's cinematic qualities. He makes his artistic decisions based on an understanding of Cambodian traditional art and a familiarity with Chinese, Indian, and American mass-cultural forms. He is highly conscious of the handmade nature of the video: the manipulation of the camera, subjects, and light during the shooting, the editing and combination of images, sounds, and effects during post-production.

Like the range of arts associated with Cambodian weddings in America—including music, costume, verbal oratory—the video has come to be an essential component of a good wedding. Through the video the couple can relive and again enjoy the event, and can show it to others. (People have put wedding videos on their VCRs for me at their homes on occasion, while serving me dinner). Furthermore, through the repeated viewing of certain sections of the wedding—or at the very least through the recording of those sec-

Khmer wedding with Mr. Ouch operating the video camera. Sa Ream drawing the sword for the cutting down of the flower. Nath Nam sings, her face superimposed *singing to the wedding couple, haircutting ceremony with Nath Nam at right and Sa Ream, scissors in hand, as barber. Photos: Bill Westerman*

tions—good fortune and good luck may follow, as certain prayers and songs bring powers every time they are played. Mr. Ouch has lamented to me that one section of the wedding is visually uninteresting from the point of view of video, yet everyone insists it be included in the final edited tape, because it brings good luck.

Usually included in the video are all the aspects of the traditional formal ceremony itself. Videos may also include the modern and "American" elements: the limousine ride to the restaurant, the receiving line, and the guests dancing to the music of a Cambodian rock band. (This innovation results from the mix of traditional Khmer social dance music with electric instruments and American and French mass culture). Cambodian weddings have changed here in many ways and videos record these changes.

But wedding videos have also developed an aesthetic of their own. Standards of beauty and appropriateness are often culturally determined, and certain camera techniques are desirable, certain motifs—such as flowers and lovebirds—considered more romantic. A good video artist, one whose work is sought after, will develop a sensitivity to what people like and deem important.

A successful videographer must also become knowledgeable about every facet of the wedding ceremony in order to know what to record, where to be positioned, on whom to focus. In Mr. Ouch's videos, the wedding music often plays a large role at the beginning of the tape, and he is careful to keep the camera moving, à la MTV, in interesting and visually stimulating ways. It often appears the cameraman is dancing with the ***achar***, the ritual specialist who helps to conduct the wedding. And unconventional, particularly cinematic camera angles abound: an aerial view of the string tying ceremony gives a close-up of the wedding couple's hands, the hair-cutting ceremony is shown from the point of view of the musician acting as "barber." Ritual dance movements by wedding performers are seen from near and far. Close-ups and long-shots, point of view shots, angles too close for still photographers, and music sequences are all edited in synchronization with the beat of the traditional music.

In two fascinating articles, Joyce Hammond discusses the similarity between videographers and ethnographers in a Utah community. Those who make videos must be expert in knowing what is or is not important to tape, and they also tend to be people on the margins of their community (like ethnographers), whose role as designated cultural observers often forces them to stand (at least metaphorically) off to the side to observe the actions of the mainstream of their culture. They become acutely sensitive to the community's aesthetic standards and sense of propriety; they learn the boundaries of what people do and do not like; and they often see more—having out of necessity to see everything. Because they have to document their community, they may become highly self-conscious of it (and sometimes critical in their judgments). In Mr. Ouch's case this includes not only an understanding of the wedding ceremony and its associated arts, but an understanding of the history of the Cambodian American community including, even, an awareness of the ways in which newly arrived refugees are often cheated and abused by the system and by unscrupulous outsiders.

Cambodian wedding videos combine the traditional, classical aesthetics of Khmer painting with the folky cultural aspects of ritual and ceremonial arts as well as the technology and look of popular mass media. Within the community they are artistic records of each couple's wedding, but to the larger society they document the changing traditions and values of a culture. But they are only a beginning. Artists such as Mr. Ouch are developing techniques to bring their own personal expression into the accessible popular media. From such a point they will be able to voice their perspectives, to engage in dialogue with one another and the dominant society, and to continue to produce moving images of the struggle of communities and individuals to survive.

—Bill Westerman

For further reading, see Joyce D. Hammond, "Visualizing Themselves: Tongan Videography in Utah," Visual Anthropology *1 (1988): 379-400, and "Representation in a Collaborative Video Project,"* Visual Sociology Review *4:1 (Spring 1989): 8-15.*

The story of the greedy family

January 18, 1992. Mr. Tim Proum came to my house one day. At that time my family was watching a Chinese story, an opera on videotape that we rented from an Asian video store, and there was one greedy family in the story. It was a rich family, and that family hardly let anybody come to their house because they were afraid that they would waste their tea or wine. They were so greedy, they never gave anything to poor people. Worst of all, they hardly ever ate meat, only vegetables and rice. They said that meat was a waste of money. After Mr. Proum watched that story of the greedy family, he brought up another story. He said, "It's like one of the stories that my grandparents used to tell me when I was a kid." After I heard him say that, I make him tell me the whole story and I took notes on it.

There was a girl who was about fourteen years old, and everyday her mother used to send her off to dig for roots and wild vegetables for the family to eat. One day she got her spade as usual and set off to look for food. When she got to the the middle of the forest there was a little small hill by the side of a cave. Suddenly, her spade slipped and fell into the crevice. It went so far in that she couldn't reach it. She didn't know what to do, so she called out: "If there is anyone willing to come and help me get my spade back, I will give you a reward." Then, someone did hear her calling out: it was a tiger, an old tiger with a hurt head.

Because of its wound, the tiger was very bothered by flies and all kinds of insects. "Little girl", said the tiger, "I will get your spade for you, but you have to promise to do something for me. You have to help me get rid of all these insects that are bothering me. I don't want any other reward from you." "All right, old tiger," said the girl, who was kind and had a good soul. "Just get my spade back for me and I'll do that for you." So the old tiger tried so hard to get the spade back for her, and was successful. Then the tiger asked the girl to help get rid of the insects. As she was kindly, she took a thorn to clean the wound. Then she got rid of all the insects that been bothering the tiger's head.

"Little girl," asked the tiger, "how is my wound now, does it look better?" In fact, the wound was still festering and looked very bad, but the kind girl who did not want to upset the old tiger, replied, "well tiger, it's very clean and much better now." The tiger was very pleased. After the little girl had finished cleaning the tiger's head, it certainly did feel better and no longer hurt. The tiger said to her, "little girl, give me your basket and old tiger will put some roots and wild vegetables in it for you." So the little girl picked up her basket and handed it to the tiger. Then the tiger filled up her basket with pure gold and silver—right up to the top, too. Then the tiger closed the basket, tied it up and give it to her.

"Little girl," said the tiger, "Take this basket home. Call your brothers, sisters, your parents and relatives, and close the door. Don't let outsiders see it. Then you can open the basket."

So the little girl got the basket, and didn't even said goodbye to the tiger. She just hurried home and told her mother what happened. Her mother, thinking of all the gold and silver in the basket, was very, very pleased about what her daughter had gotten for her. She called the whole family together and they shut the door. Then they opened the basket to see what was in it. Great long snakes came slithering out and bit all those greedy people in the family, and they all died.

After Mr. Proum told the story, my sister Channary said that she didn't

Copy of Vannthan Ouch's snapshot of his painting of a Khmer landscape.

Photo: Bill Westerman

nderstand and asked why the
eople got killed. Mr. Proum told
er that it was because the little
irl didn't say goodbye, or thanks
o the tiger. She asked again why
hat was so bad. Then, Mr. Proum
nd my father and my mother told
er that when somebody does
omething good, or gives you
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hould remember them, and be
hankful. Because she didn't say
oodbye or thanks to the tiger, all
he gold turned into snakes. Then
ny father brought up the story
bout the hunter who killed alot of
irds and animals and the
nonk....

—Leendavy Koung

his is the second in a series of
hmer folktales that we have
rinted here, recorded as part of
ur Cambodian Community Doc-
mentation Project, a collabora-
ion with the Cambodian
ssociation of Greater Philadel-
hia, supported by a grant from
he Museums in the Life of a City
roject of the American Associa-
ion of Museums, funded by The
ew Charitable Trusts. We will be
ncluding this and many other sto-
ies told locally in our forthcom-
ng resource volume on
ambodian culture.

PFP NEWS

Don't forget the challenge!

We're more than halfway to our goal of raising $5,000 in new donations. And it's just in time: we face a $6,000 shortfall as we go to press. We truly need your help, in any amount you can offer. If everyone who receives this newsletter sends just $10, we would have $4,000. We could use it. Please help. You can use the form on the back of the newsletter or give us a call.

Board news

We are happy to announce new board co-chairs,Germaine Ingram and Clare Yellin, who took office this summer. Our gratitude to retiring board officers (but continuing board members) Jack Lindsey and John Roberts for their great efforts. Thanks to all board members for their ongoing dedication and commitment: Roger Abrahams, Blanche Epps, Germaine Ingram, Thora Jacobson, Jack Lindsey, Cheryl McClenney-Brooker, Samien Nol, Ann Ollman, John Roberts, Pang Xiong Sirirathasuk, and Clare Yellin.

Mark your calendar

Tom Morton's photo show (September 8-October 8) is described in this issue, pp. 5-12. We hope you'll join us at the opening on September 8th, 5:30-7:30 pm. Our fall community concert featuring noted Cambodian musicians is scheduled for November 8th, 4:00-6:00 pm. Bring the family and join us.

ODUNDE update

Are you from South Philadelphia? Do you remember the Halloween parade at Broad and South, the Daddy Grace Parade, PAL league games and dances, May processions, Sidney's Dance Studio, the Showboat, Emerson, 2-Bit, or Pep's, dances at the O.V. Catto, Victory parties after WWII, the Elk's parade, Adele Reed Hairdressers, The Lincoln Post, Reynolds Hall? For our collaboration with ODUNDE, we're documenting and exploring the history of African American festivities and gatherings from 1945 to the present. If you can help with memories, ideas about who to talk to, or if you know of collections of pictures or other documents of these events, please call Nomalanga Dalili at the PFP office, 238-0096. Thanks!

Kudos

For their support of PFP programs, we thank The Pew Charitable Trusts, Samuel Fels Fund, Philadelphia Foundation, Philadelphia Folk Song Society, CoreStates, National Endowment for the Arts-Folk Arts Program, Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, Pennsylvania Humanities Council, Pennsylvania Dept. of Community Affairs, State Senator Vincent Fumo, and our members.

Still Available

The PFP has published **books** (a ***Guide to Philadelphia Folklife Resources***, ***Uses of Tradition: Arts of Italian Americans in Philadelphia***, and more), **videos** (on Khmer arts, palm-weaving, mummers' costumes, and traditional gardening), **working papers** and other **resource materials**. Please call us for a full list and information about how to order: 238-0096.

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About the Philadelphia Folklore Project

We are committed to paying attention to the fundamental ways in which people organize, understand, and share their experiences and knowledge.... We're five years old this year—and we're an independent public folklife agency with local roots, scholarly perspectives, activist programs, and a commitment to taking arts and culture seriously. We assist artists and communities, conduct research, develop exhibitions, offer public programs, workshops and technical assistance, maintain an archive, and issue publications and resources. If you value our work, please join us. And tell your friends. Thanks to a Challenge Grant from the Philadelphia Foundation, the dollars you donate or pledge will be matched by additional donations.

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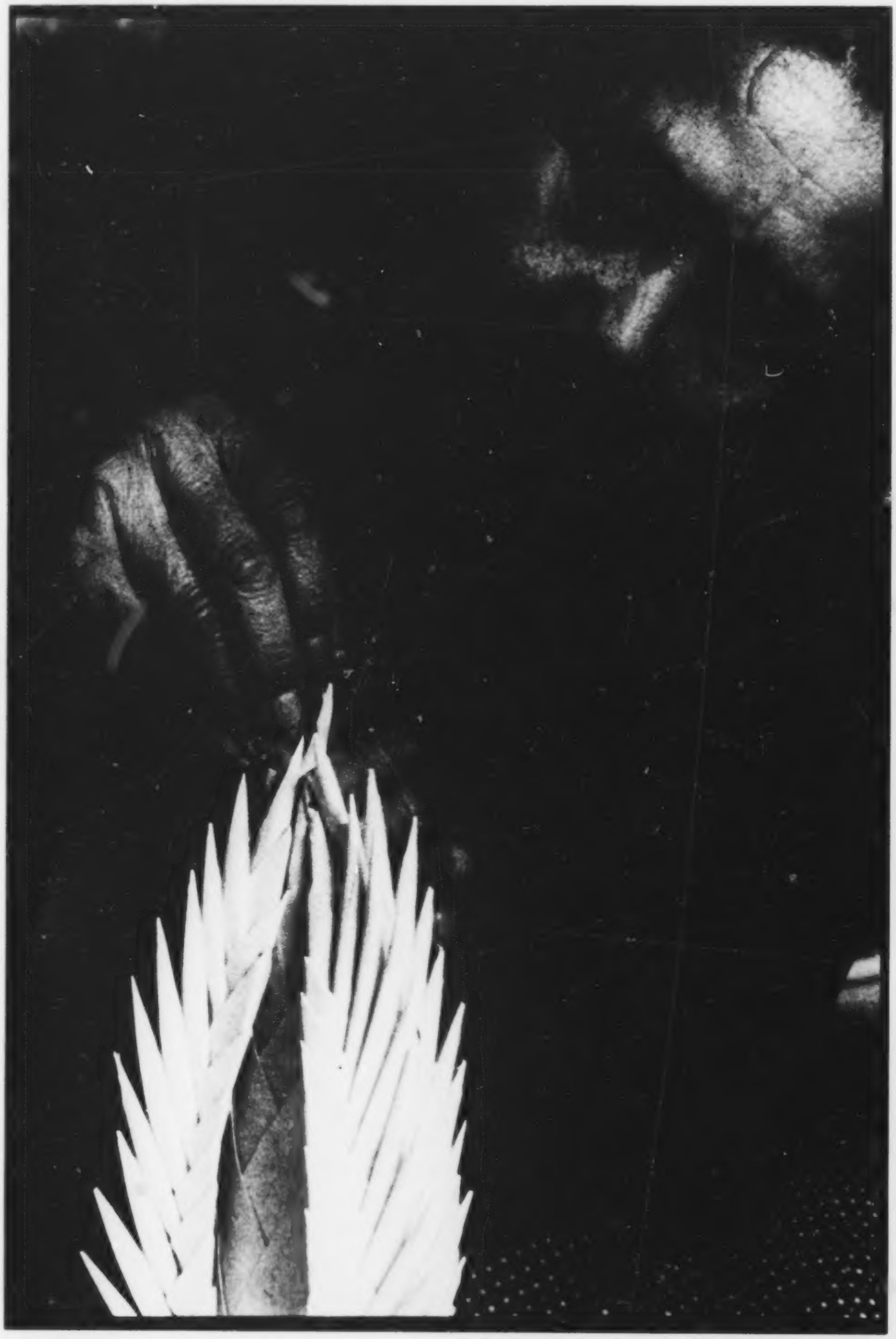

Right: Boumma Thamphya making a markbeng. September 1992 Photo: Jane Levine

Below: Preparing scented water for washing the Buddha statues, Lao New Year, 1992. Photo: Jennifer Michael

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Boun pi mai: customs of the Lao New Year

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Boumma Thamphya making a markbeng.
September 1992
Photo: Jane Levine

Public ceremonies, private rituals, veneration of elders and reverence for departed relatives, solemn washing of the Buddha statues and playful sprinkling or sloshing of water on anyone within reach—these are among the ways that local Lao people both remember and presently celebrate the New Year, *Boun Pi Mai*. The diverse festivities traditionally last five days, although few Lao people here can afford to take that much time off to celebrate.

Lao people observe the Buddhist New Year, which falls in early April. In Laos, this is the height of the dry season, when it's very hot and water is generally scarce. But during the New Year celebration, people splash water on one another everywhere: in the marketplace, in the street, at home. Anyone passing by is fair game, and older people sometimes prefer to stay indoors to avoid getting soaked. People pour water on others from various containers, and even might dunk other people in the large household water jars. Some people put coloring in the water; red or blue water make more of an effect. Basil seeds soaked in the water, then thrown, or thrown with water leave a purple stain on clothing which immediately needs to be washed or it will leave a permanent mark. Mischievous or malicious pranksters might even throw sewage water, but usually only at a specific target—a girl who had scorned them, for example. Others collect ashes from a wood cooking fire or the black greasy soot from the bottom of cooking pots to smear on people's faces.

Although many people associate these exuberant practices with the Lao New Year, they deny that such traditions are followed here. People who do remember speak nostalgically about how much fun water splashing was. Chanthavy Thamphya remarks: "People say that they don't splash water here because of the damage that could be done to American-style homes if they were drenched with water. Also, people feel that Americans wouldn't understand the custom and might well resent getting doused. Houses in Laos had concrete floors or were raised up on wooden poles; splashing water on them did no harm." Throwing water, according to Ms. Thamphya is a way of washing away the bad things from the old year and making everything new. Many other Lao New Year customs provide traditional and symbolic ways to let go of the past, and to look with hope toward the future.

Some Lao New Year customs resemble other significant events in the Lao calendar or the personal life cycle. In many Lao families, the New Year is a time to hold a *basi* or *soukoin*, a ceremony that also marks other times of change and vulnerability. (For example, if people are getting married, if someone is going away, if someone has just joined the family, if there is a new baby, a new house, or a new car, we do a *soukoin* ceremony, says Outh Pravongviengkham. "And we do it for the New Year.") While on other occasions the *soukoin* is generally for a specific person, at the New Year it is for everybody. The ritual is intended to strengthen the participants' *koin*—their spiritual essence or life force—in a time of transition.

The main preparation for the soukoin ritual involves setting up the *prakoin* (*pra* means tray; this might be translated as "portable altar.") "Not everybody knows how to make it. It's the woman's job to make the altar. I mean, most of the household work in my country is just the woman's job. The men just go to work, and then they come back and do nothing. Really," says Mr. Pravongviengkham. He explains that on the *prakoin* go a variety of foods: fruit, eggs, specially prepared chicken, or sometimes pig.

In the center of the *prakoin* stands a beautiful decorative centerpiece called a *markbeng*, a sort of tall spiky crown-like decoration made of folded banana leaves or paper and trimmed with flowers. In Laos, women normally used green banana leaves to make the *markbeng*, but here in Philadelphia, where the proper leaves are not available, women use colored paper instead. The paper is rolled and folded "and held together with a little bamboo stick." Wildflowers from the Lao countryside were "stuck in all around" the *markbeng*. "It's really beautiful with differ-

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Mrs. Thamphya at work: finished markbeng *are on the tray.*

ent colors, and it's just for decoration so you can use anything. There's different ways of making them. Nowadays they have different ideas about this kind of thing."

The *markbeng* goes in a bowl in the center of the *prakoin*, and rice is used to hold it. "It's become the tradition," says Mr. Pravongviengkham. "You put the *markbeng* in the tray, and you put the rice to cover. You tie a candle to a stick and poke the stick into the top of the *markbeng*, so you can light the candle. In some poor families they might not have the *markbeng*, but if the celebration is a real good one, they've got to have it. Like when people are going to get married, they've got to have a nice suit, a marriage suit—like that. In my family, since I was born, my mother, no matter how much she could afford, she's going to do it. We don't take the *markbeng* to the temple for the New Year. We just do it at home, and everybody comes."

People sit on the floor around the *prakoin* with their legs folded to one side and their hands folded in front of them. Long strings are tied to the *markbeng* and those in the inner circle around the *prakoin* clasp the ends of these long strings between their hands. Those sitting farther away touch the back or elbow of someone in the inner circle and in this way are also joined to the *markbeng*, though indirectly.

A ritual specialist known as a *maw phone* is hired to perform the soukoin ceremony: "We get one old man—it doesn't have to be an old man, just a guy who knows how to say the words. If I want to do the *prakoin*, I call the old man so he can say the words for me. And we've got specific words for that, to say in front of the *markbeng*, like a wish, you know. We call the spirits to come and take over the celebration. He tells the people to forget the past, just keep the good things. The main thing is that he talks about the good things, blesses the people who are there together. After the man says the words for the altar, he gives out the food. He takes some chicken or some cookies, and gives it to the people around him—not to everybody, because there's a lot of people, only to the people right around him. Everybody else just tries to get a piece, because they believe that the food from the *prakoin* is good, lucky. You just get a little piece of something," says Mr. Pravongviengkham.

The *soukoin* ends in the tying of a string around the wrists of the participants. People say that this string helps bind the *koin* to the body. "You also have to have the string, the string that the leader is gonna tie on everybody, hanging from the *markbeng*," says Mr. Pravongviengkham. "It's like a priest blessing a newborn baby. Just the same thing: he ties it on and he blesses him. He tells the good spirit to stay in your body, just stay inside. He does this for everybody who's there. On both wrists, one string on each wrist. And then, after that they just grab strings and tie them to each other and bless each other. But we believe that if the old man ties the string for us, it's gonna be good. That's how we believe. So it's better to have the old man do it. Normally, we keep that on for three days. And the right thing is not to cut it off; we gotta untie it."

After three days, it's very important to dispose of the string properly. Bounma Thamphya explains that "you must untie the string, never cut it or slip it off. When someone dies with a string still on their wrist, the string is cut off; you must never cut the string off the wrist of a living person, because that means they're like a dead person and it shortens their life. Once off your wrist, the string must be carefully put away."

Dead people, living people with bad intentions, and ghosts: they are to be kept quite separate from the string, once connected to you, still holding the measure of your wrist. The metaphors and practices of important rituals often condense a great deal of cultural knowledge, and so do peoples' explanations of past and present customs. What do you do with the strings that symbolically tie you to community? Traditions encourage you not to let these strings fall among those lost to community, or those who threaten the connections among people. Simple strings carry many messages. Far from Laos, they may be used as a way of remembering (and honoring) how people used to do things.

—Chanthavy Thamphya and Jennifer Michael

Special thanks to Outh Pravongviengkham, Soumaly Kotatone, Bounma Thamphya, and Joyce White.

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Jennifer Michael learns how to tie string as in a soukoin.

Photos: Jane Levine

"The heart lasts longer than appearances:" Hmong kwv txhiaj (courting song) at New Years

"For Hmong people," say Pang Xiong Sirirathasuk and T-Bee Lo, "the New Year is a good time for starting anything new." People put on new clothes and make new friends; those who follow traditional Hmong religious practice redecorate their home altars. Relationships are off to a good start if they begin with the New Year.

Hmong people traditionally follow a lunar calendar, and reckon the year as beginning in late December. But because Hmong families and kin are now living in many places across the United States, Hmong associations in various areas coordinate their official festivities, sponsoring outdoor New Year celebrations over a period of several months. People can visit old friends and make new friends in different parts of the country. Hmong from Philadelphia may travel as far as Wisconsin, Minnesota or even California for a big New Year party. And the Philadelphia celebration held in November, although relatively small, draws people from throughout the Northeastern states. People say that attending these celebrations helps them, and other Hmong people across the United States, feel that they are part of a single community.

Foua Lo at a Hmong New Year celebration, 1991. Photo courtesy T-Bee Lo

An important part of the Hmong New Year celebration, or *noj peb caug*, is the interaction between young men and women. In Hmong traditional culture, "there is shyness between the girls and the boys. The whole year round they are not expected to communicate or go out. But the New Year celebration, that's the occasion when teenagers can interact and find out about one another, share, and talk," says Mrs. Sirirathasuk. Things have changed since the Hmong moved to the United States: school and other activities encourage casual friendships between young men and women, and many young Hmong have steady girlfriends or boyfriends. Even so, the New Year celebration still gives young Hmong men and women an important opportunity to meet and interact with Hmong people from other parts of the country. Many people attend these celebrations because they hope to find a spouse, although, traditionally, only men are allowed to admit this. The main activities of the day—throwing a ball back and forth and singing a particular kind of interactive song—provide a way for couples to "overcome their traditional shyness," act more directly than norms usually allow, and get to know each other.

Any young woman who wishes to participate in *pov moj pob* or *pov khaub hnab*, the ball-throwing game, must bring a ball with her. Traditionally, she makes her ball, called *moj pob* or *khaub hnab*, by hand, tightly winding narrow strips of cloth into a sphere to form its core, then covering it over with a hand-sewn fabric cover. In Laos, some girls still make *moj pob* with embroidered covers, although this is rarely the case in the United States, where commercial balls are now sometimes used.

A young man has the responsibility of approaching a young woman he finds attractive. She cannot approach him unless they are already acquainted. Mrs. Sirirathasuk warns: "Something you have to watch before you start asking for her name is whether she's single or she's married. So the best thing is to find out—ask her, 'Are you married? Are you single?'" Mr. Vang explains how he would go about approaching a girl: "I approach you by asking which clan you belong to or what's your last name. And if you happen to be some other last name than myself, the first thing I ask is can we do some ball-throwing? Very few say no. It's a time they should be open; they should be open to anyone. Very few people feel really shy on that occasion. You just go up to them and ask."

Boys and girls stand in separate lines facing one another and throw balls back and forth, boys to girls and girls to boys. People talk casually during the game, but throwing the ball also gives you the chance to learn more about your partner: How does she look in profile? How well does he move? How patient is he? Does she get angry easily? By watching the reaction of your partner to a throw that is over his head, by making her reach for the ball or even chase it, by doing "crazy" or annoying throws or perhaps even knocking her hat to the ground, you can begin to get a sense of his or her personality and physique.

If the game is going well and if the players like each other, they may agree to sing *kwv txhiaj* together. *Kwv txhiaj* is a special kind of interactive song, performed by a man and a woman who take turns singing back and forth. Either may propose it, but the man usually begins the contest. According to Mr. Vang, "They start with asking the opponent to do the ball-throwing. Then maybe in a minute or so, either opponent might start asking, 'Would you sing for me?' A few times, then she might say, 'Okay.' Or she might ask him, and he might say, 'Sure,' and start singing. So you start asking things like that, and, again, it goes deeper."

A *kwv txhiaj* session is both a contest to determine the better singer and a chance to get to know a potential spouse and to let her or him know you. In *kwv txhiaj* singing, you have the chance to "announce yourself," to show who you are inside, and to demonstrate your skill. The talent and sensitivity of a good singer are more important than physical beauty; even an unattractive person may be considered desirable if she expresses herself well in *kwv txhiaj*. "When it gets to her turn to sing she might know better songs. That way she can express herself saying, 'If you like me, don't like me from the outside; know me from the inside.' Start singing songs like that—and you 've got listeners, too. They walk around, and if they hear your song, they might stop by and listen for a little while, and the longer they stay, the better they know you," says Mrs. Sirirathasuk. In *kwv txhiaj*, you can get past the superficial things to what's more important. Mr. Vang explains, "People sing songs that tell the truth about themselves, what they expect in life, that beauty only lasts a few days, a few years, but your soul—the way you are, what you are—that's what's gonna take you all the way. After a few songs that express oneself that way, then most guys, instead of going for a person who looks so good—although that's the first attraction—they find out more about it. The heart lasts longer than appearances."

Through *kwv txhiaj*, you can dare to express feelings and thoughts you might otherwise have trouble saying. Yang Blianghheng Lo says, "You cannot tell them just by words—you have to tell them by *kwv txhiaj*, so that way they understand the feelings." T-Bee Lo says that the meanings of these songs are "deeper" and more powerful than spoken words, and Mr. Vang calls them "a new way of communicating," stressing that not being able to sing makes it hard to communicate: "If I don't know what the girl sings to me, and I don't know how to sing back, then she will turn away and go sing with somebody else. If I know how to sing back then I'll answer what she has sung to me and continue from there, and you get a better relationship that way. If you can't sing, it's just like you don't want to express yourself to her." "But not everybody knows how to sing, and if you don't know then you just talk ," says Yang Blianghheng Lo.

When you sing *kwv txhiaj* at a New Year celebration, everyone—not just your partner—can hear what you are saying. Parents, in particular, are interested in what their children are singing and to whom, as well as what is being sung to them. "Usually the father doesn't care, but the mother always follows the daughter and always opens her ears to listen to what kind of song the children are singing. They sit nearby to watch and listen," says Mr. Yang Lo. Mr. Vang explains, "The parents of the boy stand on the side, and the girl's family stands on the other side, looking at each other and determining whether they're the right couple. If not, you've got the whole day and the next one."

Kwv txhiaj singing uses a special kind of poetic language that is different from the way Hmong usually speak. This makes these songs hard to understand for anyone who has not specifically learned how to interpret and sing. In traditional Hmong culture, children would seek out someone to teach them *kwv txhiaj*, usually a relative or a friend. "Most of the time, the girl learns from the lady and the boy learns from the man, because they're shy. But anyone can sing anyone's song," says Mr. Yang Lo. People find different ways of learning, by listening carefully, "keeping it in their mind," and practicing on their own when they are alone.

Pang Xiong Sirirathasuk and T-Bee Lo with Hmong bamboo flutes. They are teaching Hmong young people kwv txhiaj. *Photo: Jane Levine*

In this country, where people often do not have the time to teach *kwv txhiaj*, many Hmong have turned to technology. At any New Year celebration, a skilled singer will be surrounded by people with tape recorders, who are collecting songs to learn. Other people record the songs so they can enjoy the music in their solitary hours. "The elderly people," says Mrs. Sirirathasuk,"they do not have any usage of *kwv txhiaj* anymore. So they record it so they can listen to it when they're alone and get a little feeling of the past, of their teenager time."

Learning *kwv txhiaj* means mastering a repertoire of songs and learning their special form of language, but it also means'understanding their poetic structure. If you fully understand the form, you can create new songs. And this can often be an advantage in a contest. "For example, you could use the verse that was just sung and make a new one out of it. Like you could just say a few words. All you need is the introduction of the verse and you could change it around and make many verses using that introduction. If you know the structure, it's very easy. But if you do not know the structure, it doesn't rhyme. It doesn't make sense," says Mr. Vang.

Each verse *(ibtxwg)* of a *kwv txhiaj* has two couplets: four lines in all. The last word of each line of a couplet must rhyme. The best rhymes match both tones and vowels sounds, but rhymes where only vowels match are also acceptable. The length of the lines may vary considerably. Each verse is composed of a pair of linked ideas: the first couplet is a metaphor drawn from nature, and the second refers directly to the couple. Mr. T-Bee Lo refers to this structure as two "reasons" and two "results." By this he means that there is a cause-and-effect suggested within each couplet, and both parts of the verse comment on the couple's relationship. Mr. Vang says, "You could compare it to trees, birds, skies, any animals. It's always structured so that there are metaphors and then something that matches to it: the second line has to be related to the couple. It's always structured, but the line can be as long as it could be, as long as the last word rhymes."

In a *kwv txhiaj* contest, when one singer has finished her song, her partner must respond with a different and better song. When he has done, she must again answer back with a still better song. A skilled *kwv txhiaj* singer might know more than a hundred songs, from which she could select an appropriate response to any preceding song. Or an expert singer might choose to improvise a new song. Mrs. Sirirathasuk and Mr. Vang agree. "The winner is the one that sings the best song of all the songs that have been sung, the song that has a deeper rhyme to it and deeper words to it. Some singers, they have very basic lyrics to the song, and the one who knows deeper lyrics so that the opponent doesn't understand—that's the winner. Let me give you an example: some singers, they know basic Hmong lyrics to the song, but some they know some Chinese lyrics. They combine the two and make it a little tougher to understand, and when it comes to that point, the partner who doesn't understand loses the singing. Some singers who are experts in singing, they could also switch the wordings around and confuse the other opponent. And if they give up, then you'll be the winner. It gets a little complicated."

Winning is important, because a skilled singer is much admired and may even be invited to participate in public competitions in different cities during the New Year. At these popular performances, it doesn't matter whether singers are teenagers or elderly. "It's just what they know, what they can sing," says Mrs. Sirirathasuk. On the other hand, says Mr. Vang, "It really doesn't matter if you lose your *kwv txhiaj* contest. For example, if you're the girl and you sing and I lose, it just happens that I like you more. It doesn't end like if I lose, I hate you more. It doesn't go like that! It's just more like survival of the fittest. If I win, all those people that are watching me they'll probably say, 'Ooh, he's pretty good!' You get a lot of new listeners every ten-twenty minutes. And the better you sing, the more people know you and the better chance of having an awesome girl!"

Despite its competitive aspect, the main purpose of *kwv txhiaj* singing is to communicate with a potential spouse. One way of doing this is by shaping your song in response to your partner's singing. Skill at reworking the metaphors used in a partner's song gives the singer the opportunity to test and communicate common interests and understandings.

If you want to discourage a partner who doesn't interest you, you can also communicate this by singing a *kwv txhiaj chib*. This special type of *kwv txhiaj* is specifically intended to insult and anger your partner; the word chib means "to push away." You can also use *kwv txhiaj chib* to test out your partner's character: "Say the worst thing you could think of about her and see how she reacts. You want her to react the best—be very patient, if possible," says Mrs. Sirirathasuk. People watch carefully to see how a person responds as she or he listens to a *kwv txhiaj chib*: Does he get visibly angry? Does her face flush or contort with emotion? These are considered to be bad signs which suggest a lack of patience and a bad temper. A person who shows his or her bad feelings is perhaps an unwise choice for a spouse.

Mr. Vang reflects that "Some couples in here in the USA and in our country during the singing end up agreeing to get married to each other. Without the songs, I don't know if they'd be able to find out about one another that much. I don't know how they get there, but the songs, that helps a lot."

—Yang Blianghheng Lo, Pang Xiong Sirirathasuk and Jennifer Michael, with the assistance of T-Bee Lo, Khue Vang and Chakaphong Sirirathasuk

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New Year occurs all year round, this special newsletter issue reminds us. Most Philadelphia-area Hmong celebrate New Year in November. Most Khmer observe New Year annually on the second weekend in April; the Lao holiday is about the same time. Most Vietnamese and ethnic Chinese celebrate the New Year from December through late January and early February. The year is begun, the calendar reckoned, in multiple ways.

The "American" (chiefly European and Christian) calendar, like other features of dominant culture, seems to be neutral but in fact exerts a chilling influence upon the practice of diversity, the enactment of identity. The burden of accommodation is shifted to the shoulders of "minority" communities and each essay in this newsletter comments in some way about peoples' struggles to reconcile their worlds. Their efforts are reflected in their arts (challenging the stereotype that traditional arts are "unchanging," "anonymous," not "cutting edge.")

At a meeting at the Southeast Asian Mutual Assistance Association (SEAMAAC) more than a year and a half ago, leaders of the different Mutual Assistance Associations (MAAs) serving local Southeast Asian communities spoke of their disappointment that, despite invitations, "American people" seldom came to their public New Year celebrations. The reputed interest in multiculturalism and the large number of requests that "minority" organizations provide performers and speakers (usually for free) have not been translating into support for grassroots culture on its own terms. Yet support for local, grassroots, community institutions—and for arts and events that are rooted in neighborhoods and that sustain neighborhoods socially, spiritually, aesthetically and financially—is absolutely essential if we are to preserve the vitality and diversity of our cultural fabric. Public Southeast Asian celebrations described here represent a small fraction of the thousands of such arts and cultural events occuring around the city on any given weekend: all occasions when communities are displaying their arts and traditions in their own dynamic, contested and evolving terms; here are naturally occuring occasions of performance, celebration, art and festivity, usually produced on a shoestring (or rather, through enormous investments of people's time). Here are events to which the interested might contribute, ways in which people can support community efforts, community institutions, and community arts.

But it should be stressed that Americans were not the chief concern of MAA leaders. Leaders also felt that their own American-born children were growing up unaware of their own traditions, arts and histories, and that members of other Southeast Asian communities would benefit from a project that could document and explore some of the significant arts associated with one another's New Years. Asian peoples were often lumped together, some leaders said, and it was important that people begin to distinguish both distinct and ancient cultures and diverse individuals within them.

Out of these discussions grew the New Years Project, organized by SEAMAAC with the cooperation of the MAAs and technical assistance from the PFP, and with financial support from the National Endowment for the Arts-Folk Arts Program and the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts. While the project is barely at its mid-point, we present in this issue excerpts from some of the work that has been done by a team of Lao, Vietnamese, Khmer, ethnic Chinese, and Hmong researchers working with folklorists. SEAMAAC plans to produce a larger multilingual publication in the spring.

MAA offices can provide more information about public celebrations of New Year and ongoing educational, cultural and social service programs: Mr. Cuong Nhu Pham, Vietnamese National Association (592-4687); Mr. Wutha Chin, Cambodian Association (324-4070); Mr. Bounpheng Khamsengxay, Lao Association, 465-9202); Mr. Chou Koua Kue, Hmong Association (324-3278); Mr. John Kuo, Overseas Chinese Association (222-7833). For additional information, contact SEAMAAC 476-9640

—Debora Kodish

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"Money tree" with flowers, gifts and wishes for the monks, Lao New Year, 1991. Photo: Jennifer Michael

Bánh Tét: New Year's cakes and their meanings

Although **bánh tét**, New Year's cakes, are widely associated with Vietnamese New Year's, there is a great variety of opinions regarding the significances or meanings of the delicious steamed rice cakes. In the following essay, people emphasize or know different features of traditional legends about **bánh tét**. The cakes are variously associated with (among other things) the unity of the Vietnamese people, the virtues of a good son, opposition to outside Chinese forces, and the virtues of a common peoples' food, available to all (as opposed to an exotic food, the property of the rich). The seemingly simple cakes hold many meanings. The first story is told by Mai Mai:

"The son who could bring his father the best food for the New Year would become king upon his father's death. While the older sons set off to the ends of the earth in search of wonderful exotic foods, the youngest and poorest son wondered what to do. He was a good man and respected his parents, and he at last came up with a very simple idea. He took banana leaves and stuffed them with sticky rice filled with pork and fat and beans, making some in the shape of circles, and some as squares. His father was very displeased when he first saw his youngest son's gift, thinking it was too simple and therefore disrespectful. He threatened to behead his son, unless the prince could explain his dish to his father's satisfaction. The prince told his father that the cakes were square and round, to represent the earth and the sky. The banana leaf was for simplicity and familiarity; the sticky rice represented the people sticking together, and the rich filling represented high hopes and wealth in the New Year. So his father, liking his explanation and liking the cakes, chose his youngest son as his successor, and Vietnamese people have been making these cakes for the New Year ever since."

In contrast, consider the story which follows, told by Hồng Ly. Mr. Ly has carefully studied the historical details of this legend, especially the succession of Vietnamese kings, in order to be able to pass them on accurately to his children. He insisted on consulting his history books before consenting to have his version recorded. He began by establishing lineages. We include here the part of his story that begins with the King's attempt to identify his successor:

"During this era, a king was allowed to marry as many wives as he pleased. Hùng Nhi (the seventeenth king in the lineage) married many wives and had ninety-two children. These children were so intelligent and talented that King Hùng Nhi did not know whom to choose to succeed to his throne. A month before New Year, King Hùng Nhi thought of an idea for how to choose his successor. He told his sons that in order to become his successor, they had to find the exotic dishes that would please him the most. The order was given out, and all of the king's children except one poured out to find foods to please the king father.

The exception was the closest son to the king. He had always served his father with utmost respect and had no intention of becoming king, however, his father's order was very important; refusing could insult the king and even cause the offender to be beheaded—the king's own son couldn't avoid this possibility. Hùng Duệ worried that if he refused to go he could be in trouble.

As he stayed up late to think about what he should do, he fell asleep and had a dream. In his dream he saw an angel, who told him: "You need have no worries, such food to be brought to the king isn't very difficult to make, and its ingredients are available anywhere on earth." He then continued: "If you listen to me to make this kind of food, I assure you that you will be the successor. That exotic food uses only rice and sticky (sweet) rice along with other ingredients like meat, beans, sugar, and black pepper. All of these ingredients are items given to us by God; therefore, when you make this kind of cake, your father will be very pleased. Just remember what I said, and you will be successful."

Hùng Duệ woke up and remembered his dream, and he immediately started to go out to shop for the ingredients mentioned by the angel. As he shopped, he found that the ingredients were indeed available everywhere. He made the cakes. **Bánh dày**, the round cake, consisted of finely-ground sweet rice powder mixed with sugar, salt and water; this mixed powder was then wrapped in banana or jackfruit leaves in a round shape that represented heaven. The square cake, or **bánh chủng** consisted of sweet rice with such seasoned stuffing as meat,

A finished bánh chủng. *Photo: Jane Levine* beans, sugar, salt, and black pepper and wrapped in banana leaves in a square shape, which represented the earth.

Five days before the New Year—Tết Nguyên Đán, now called Tết for short—the king said to Hùng Dực: 'All of your brothers have already brought their dishes to me, and what had you gotten for me?' Hùng Dực then replied to the king: 'Dear father, I do have something for you. I only have two kinds of cakes, and they are very common and simple.' The king tried the cakes and surprisingly said, 'What kind of cakes are these? They are very delicious and unusually tasty.' Hùng Dực immediately told his father that the round cake was the heaven cake and the square cake was the earth cake. 'These cakes are parts of our daily lives, therefore they are very precious.' When the king tried the cakes he had a strange feeling about them, because he was the king and he always ate exotic foods for his daily meals. He called his wife and told her about the cakes and had her try them. The queen also, surprisingly, said, 'Wow, these cakes are very delicious; they are worth eating and they are even better than those exotic dishes that your brothers brought us.' After trying the cakes, the king announced: 'These cakes are simple and cheap enough for everyone to make and buy. I am not happy to be the only one who has these cakes; instead, I want to spread this news throughout my kingdom so everyone can have a chance to eat these cakes.'

Since these cakes were brought around New Year, they have been made every year to celebrate the New Year and to commemorate the last king of Hùng Vương's generations. These cakes are not only used for the New Year, they are also used on such occasions as funerals, special events, and commemorative days for our ancestors. (Told in Vietnamese by Hồng Lý, 6/20/92; translated by Trinh Đặng)

Mr. Lý emphasizes what is specifically Vietnamese about bánh tét and sets his story in the context of Vietnamese efforts to preserve a distinctly Vietnamese cultural heritage despite nearly a thousand years of domination by the Chinese. The symbolism of the bánh are understood differently by different people; families tell different stories, and explanations about the cakes also change according to what a speaker thinks their audience needs to understand. After reading the two versions of the story given here, Cường Phạm explained how his own version differs from them: The old king was sick and knew he was going to die, so he assembled his sons to ask them to bring him something special and exotic to eat. He promised to give up his throne to whoever pleased him the most. The sixth son, Liêu, had lost his mother as a young boy, so he had no one to help him prepare the exotic foods the king had requested. As in Hồng Lý's version of the story, Liêu fell asleep and was visited in a dream by an angel, who told him how to make the cakes. Having help from an angel was an omen showing that Liêu was destined to become king, according to Mr. Pham. The angel told Liêu that the round cake represented heaven and the square one represented the earth. Liêu brought the cakes to the king, who tried them, liked them, and asked what they meant. Liêu told him what the angel had said. He further explained that the filling of the square cake represents the people and the rice represents the earth, so the earth is supposed to have people on it. Liêu became a good king, and he showed his people how to make the cake, and that's why it is now known throughout Vietnam. The square cake representing the earth has more symbolic significance, according to Mr. Pham, and that's why more people make and eat it.

Trinh Dang watches Tam Thi Nguyen making bánh. *Photo: Jane Levine*

Mr. Pham also described how the symbolism relates to the physical properties of the cakes. "It's very important to tie the cakes firmly so that the rice sticks together and makes the cake hold its shape. Otherwise, when you cut the cake, it will fall to pieces. The cake sticking together represents the Vietnamese people sticking together; it's a symbol of national and cultural unity." Trinh Đặng pointed out that people mean different things by "round cake," and there are variations, especially between the North and South, in how people prepare the cake. Alec Tran describes making the cakes a month before the New Year, eating them over the course of few months, and giving them away as presents: "This is the funny thing: if I have any native friends or if my parents have any native friends, we give them some, just to let them taste what we do. The more we make, the more we can give to other people. Because, if we give you some, you're gonna give us some of yours; you're cooking for us, so it's an exchange of gifts." Bánh tét exchanges create and symbolize unity. Legends and local knowledge about how the cakes originated also focus on the symbolic relationship between the small cakes and the Vietnamese people.

—Trinh Đặng and Jennifer Michael

Customs of Vietnamese New Year, Tết Nguyên-Đań

Tét, also known as Tét Nguyên Đań means New Year in Vietnamese. It is celebrated on the first day of the lunar calendar (around the end of January or the beginning of February according to the Western calendar). To the Vietnamese people, New Year is very important. It involves family gathering to commemorate and pay respect to their ancestors, Buddhist observances, and a wide range of traditional celebrations and customs that deal with luck and fortune, and that seek to avoid less favorable associations. Timed to coincide with a slow time for farmers— it occurs after the two major rice planting seasons as over—the holiday can last for as long as three months in the countryside. (Therefore, there is a saying in Vietnamese: Thang giêng ǎn Tét ở nha, thang hai cờ bạc, thang ba hội hè! Loosely translated, this means people celebrate New Year at home in the first month, gamble in the second month, and socialize in the third month!) But here in America, everyone is too busy and the celebration is abbreviated in many ways.

Houses are made spotlessly clean and decorated (sửa-soạn nhà cửa) with words and pictures conveying good wishes. People buy red paper banners inscribed with words in the old Vietnamese writing, called nôm. These words express good wishes and desires on the New Year days. People also buy imprinted pictures on polished wooden boards with images of special significance including an old teacher writing the word nôm, an old-fashioned wedding, or pigs, chickens, persons on a swing, or a wrestling match. (These indicate the peacefulness of the country). At the front gates, people may display the paintings of two knights of yesteryear governments pasted on the two doors. These are called Môn thần, the gatekeeper angels." Our homes in Philadelphia are far different from our homes in Viet Nam, but many people still make these traditional purchases from local stores, and clean and decorate their homes.

The Vietnamese people have a belief that every household has three Kitchen Gods, Ong Táo or Vua Bép, and an Earth God. Before the New Year approaches, people have every item on the altar nicely cleaned. Besides that they also buy a cap and gown for the Earth God and a set of three caps for the Kitchen Gods. According to a legend, there was once a poor couple. Because of their poverty, the husband left his wife to seek work far away. Many years later, the husband still had not returned home and the wife thought that he must have passed away and she remarried to another man. Suddenly, one day, the previous husband came home, broke, poor, and sick, and he met his wife. She fed him, and while he was eating, the other (new) husband came home from his hunting with a deer. To avoid drawing suspicion upon his wife, the old husband hid himself in a pile of rice straws. However, the new husband put the freshly-caught deer on the pile of rice straws, and lit the pile with a match in order to smoke the deer. The old husband was burned to death and when the wife realized that her husband was killed, she threw herself on the burning pile and burned to death as well. The new husband did not understand why his wife had done this, but his love for her was so strong that he plunged himself into the fire. Ngọc Hoàng Thượng Đế (the King of Gods) found that these people had such strong love for one another that he praised them and named them the Kitchen Gods.

Kitchen Gods have the responsibility of recording the bad and good of each household, and every year, on the 23rd day of the last month of the lunar calendar, every household sends their Kitchen Gods to heaven to meet the King of Gods. There the Kitchen Gods report whatever happened on earth so God can give punishments or rewards. The farewell of the Kitchen Gods to heaven, Đủa Ong Táo, is observed with preserved candies and fruits and a carp fish (which provides a form of transportation to heaven for the Kitchen Gods.) We have legends which explain the meanings of the various foods and the carp fish.

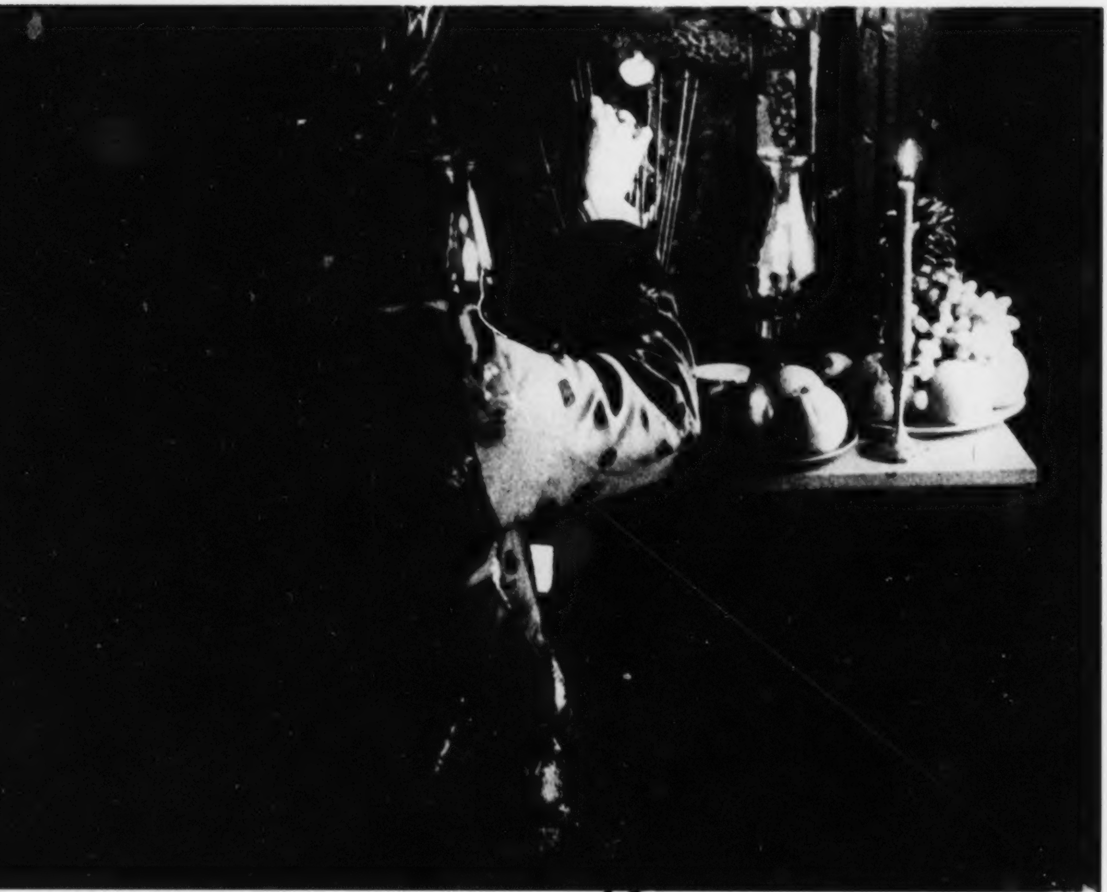
From the 23rd to 30th of the last month of the old year, Vietnamese households raise a New Year bamboo tree called cây nêu in their front yards. This bamboo tree is large and has been stripped of all leaves and branches except a few leaves on the top end. At the top, they tie a ring that has a few clay fish and pieces of metal attached around it. Every time the wind blows, these items clang and give out pleasant chimes. On peoples' front porches, with lime chalk they draw pictures of an arrow and a bow and the arrow head is pointed to the front yard. There is a belief that since the Kitchen God ascends to heaven on the 23rd of this month to the New year, unholy spirits might invade and disrupt their homes, perhaps even chasing the spirits of their ancestors away on the New Year days to steal the offerings on the altars. The pictures of the gatekeeper angels, the chimes of the clay fish and pieces of metal, and the arrow and bow on the front porch are believed to be effective weapons against these unwanted spirits. Because there is no bamboo here, and none of the materials needed for this celebration, it does not seem to occur in Philadelphia.

There are many different ceremonies at every household and at the temples. Tống cựu, nghinh tân means farewell to the old year and welcome to the new one. On New Year's Eve, the chief and his associates come to the temple to burn incense to thanh hoang, the local angels, people who once lived who did something out of the ordinary, who courageously defended their country, or who did good deeds which resulted in benefits to later generations. (The living have given them such titles to mark their heroism.) At midnight, the chief and his associates pray to the local angels to ask for blessings for everyone in the village for the year to come. After the prayer, they burn firecrackers, play drums and gongs until the ceremony is over. At temples as well as churches, followers pray and await New Year's Eve and ring bells after the ceremony is over. In homes, the main householder places a table with a plate of fruits, candles, and an incense burner on the front yard. At e same time, he prays farewell to e old angel and welcomes the new ne to his home. There is a belief that ery year God sends different angels oversee everyone on earth. He so prays for a happy and lucky ew Year for his family and then ecrackers are burned.

On New Year's Day, Mùng Một Tết, erybody wakes up early. The elders epare foods to offer the ancestors d the youngsters change into new othes. After the foods are prepared, ey are set into two trays, one for the arth Gods and the Kitchen Gods, d the other one for the ancestors. n New Year, people must not kill y living things. After the offering, e main householder lights the fire- ackers and children pay respects to e grandparents, parents,aunts and ncles, saying sống lâu (long life) or manh khỏe (great health). In return, the elders give each of them a red bag containing money called li-si. Also on New Year's day, people have a ritual of visitations to family members, Đi Lễ Tết. These visits are described in a traditional saying, "Mùng một nhà trai, mung hai nha gai, mung ba nha thầy," which means visits to the father's side on the first of New Years, to the mother's side second, and to the teacher's house third.

There are prayers and offerings throughout the first days of the New Year. This is a time to settle debts and to avoid quarreling, swearing or fighting. There are many customs dealing with luck and fortunes. The many customs and practices of the Vietnamese people on the New Year varied from one area of the country to another in Viet Nam. There are also differences in the New Year as it is celebrated by city people and country people, and by the rich and educated people and others. The ones mentioned are just a few of the many that are still widely observed, and that I remember.

—Cuong Nhu Pham, translated by Trinh Dang



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Lighting the altar at New Year, Vietnamese Buddhist Temple, Lansdowne, c. 1984. Photo: Thomas B Morton

A brief history of Chol Chhnam, Cambodian New Years celebrations in Philadelphia

Phal Ham (the middle) and other Cambodian children at New Year celebration, placing incense in the mountain of sand, 1990. Photo: Thomas B. Morton

▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲

The first public celebration of Cambodian New Year in Philadelphia occurred in April 1979, soon after the large migration of Cambodian people settled here after surviving the Khmer Rouge regime, and just two weeks after the Cambodian Association was first founded, according to Kau Our, a past president of the group. The first president of the Cambodian Association, a Mutual Assistance group, was Dr. Tong Hor Hin; subsequent presidents were Yang Sam, Samien Nol, Kau Our and (currently) Kim Hort Ou. Leaders of the Cambodian community, and many dedicated people have over the last ten years donated their time and energies for these community celebrations, and each years' event reflects in different ways the ideas, visions, skills, and resources of different community leaders. The New Year is really the only time that there is a chance for so many Cambodian people to come together in the same place for religious observances, celebrations, dances, games, food, and a chance to see and talk with one another. Cambodian classical and folk dance groups were organized in Philadelphia in 1982, as part of public celebrations of New Years. New Year celebrations have been important ways for Cambodian people to preserve and enjoy our arts.

The idea for a public celebration came from the leaders of the Cambodian Association and while the celebration differed in some ways from celebrations held in Cambodia (and later in the Thai refugee camps), it drew on what people remembered. In Cambodia, New Years was celebrated at Temples in the countryside and in the city, for three days, according to Mr. Dy Sokhoeun, but here in Philadelphia it only lasts a day and a half. Mr. Our explained that Cambodian people start to get ready for the New Year celebration beginning in February, but the most important days are the last three days, usually celebrated on the second weekend of April. People describe New Years as a time of freedom, when ordinary ways of doing things are altered. Mr. Sokhoeun said, "Any women or men can talk to each other, play games, hitting hands, dancing together, and so forth—they don't mind. It's once a year and only three days a year that the children have this freedom from their parents to enjoy themselves for the celebration. But after the three days of the New Year celebration is past, everyone is back to normal." Mr. Sokhoeun said that the third and last day of the Cambodian New Year celebration is very important. It's the day when the Buddha statue in the Temple is washed and cleaned. Everyone can wash the Buddha then—women, men, and children— and this is done only on this day, just once a year. It's a most enjoyable, exciting, wet and dirty day! But people doing it don't consider that they are getting dirty. Instead, we feel that we are washing away all the bad luck, bad life, all the bad things from before and starting to form a new life. Washing the statue of Buddha has the meaning of giving good luck, and of drawing attention to the beauty inside and outside of each person."

Mr. Phal Chhoeun said that the season in Philadelphia—cold and

iny—is quite different from the way
e season is during New Year in
mbodia. There, the weather is
arm. Also, in Philadelphia there are
ten not enough of the right materi-
s or artists for traditional dramas,
usic, and even games. Here in
iladelphia, we have to pay for the
ace to celebrate New Year. It's hard
find a place and we celebrate
side the building. In Cambodia we
ostly celebrated New Year outside
e Temple. Even the New Year party
as held outside. The only time we
ent inside was when we went to lis-
n to the monks preach in the Tem-
e. In Cambodia, New Year
lebrations were more fun, more
acious, free rather than costly and
o trouble. He said that nevertheless,
mbodian New Year celebrations
re in Philadelphia remind him of
e celebrations in the past, in Cam-
dia, Thailand and the Philippines.

Mr. Samien Nol was the first presi-
nt of the Cambodian Association of
eater Philadelphia to arrange a
blic community celebration of New
ars. He began seeking out artists,
onks and more people to get
volved. Previously, some people
veled to celebrate New Years in
her states outside Philadelphia like
lifornia, New York, and Maryland,
here more Cambodians were living,
d where Temples and formal cele-
ations were already established.
ere in Philadelphia, the community
mbodian New Year celebration in
79 was held at the IndoChinese
fugee Center. In 1980, the celebra-
n took place at the Nationalities
rvices Center, and in 1981 at the
anklin Learning Center. The com-
unity was growing and in 1982,
84 and 1985, celebrations were
ld at the International House,
hich had enough room for all of the
mmunity, and for guests as well.
e New Year celebration in 1983
s held at St. Francis de Sales
urch in West Philadelphia.

Our community was growing larg-
and the space at International
ouse was soon not big enough any-
ore, so on April 12, 1986, the year of
e tiger, New Year was celebrated at
the First Troop City Cavalry Armory, in Center City. The committee planning the event included Samien Nol, President of the Cambodian Association, and other officers, including Prak Vanny, Chea Cheang, Nop Sombath, Sin Sovann, and Kho Chin Hai.

Until we had our own Temple, about 1985, Cambodian Buddhist monks came from Maryland, Thailand and here in Philadelphia to preside over the special religious ceremonies, and community members would set up a place for the monks to stay during the New Year time. Some people prepared tables to serve foods and for donations, and others prepared food for the monks and guests. Some helped to receive donations and raise funds for the event itself, for building the Philadelphia Cambodian Buddhist Temple, and for membership in the Cambodian Association. Committees were involved in preparing food and security. Still other groups made stage decorations, sewed additional decorations, organized traditional New Year games, and cleaned up. Several musical bands always perform at New Year celebrations, including popular, *mohori*, and *pinpeat* ensembles. Some people in the community always organize traditional New Year games, including *chol chhoung* (throwing the cloth ball), *leak kanseng* (hiding and passing the scarf), *teanh proat* (rope pulling), *ankoumh* (a throwing game using a hard, dry fruit), *sdach chang* ("king" in the middle). Two years featured *lakhon* (folk opera) or other traditional drama.

In every year since 1983, performances of folk and clasical dance have been important parts of the celebration. In the early years (about 1983 to 1986 or 1987) some people who remembered dances from their own youth would teach the young people our classical and folk dances. They began these rehearsals starting in December or January, and at the same time other people would begin making the costumes that dancers needed. After about 1987, there was more formal instruction for young dancers. Miss Duong taught classical dance from about 1983 to 1986, and Mr. Ra taught folk dance in about the same years. In 1986, Mrs. Ly Gnea was in charge of costumes and arrangements for the dance performance, assisted by Mrs. Mom Sak, Mr. Koung Peang, Mr. Mou Tu, and Mr. Chan Vongheak. Mrs. Mom Sak was the costume designer and beautician for the classical dance group and her daughter South Socheaty was the classical dance teacher. Helping with the dance group were Mrs. Ly Gnea, Mr. Mou Tu, Mr. Chan Vongheak, Chom Dak, and Sin Sovann. In addition, there were two youth groups that performed that year.

Cambodian New Year celebration in April 18, 1987, the year of a rabbit, was the second celebration at the Armory, and it was a very exciting year. Lots of Cambodians came from outside the state. The folk dances organized by Mrs. Duong Phally, Mr. Proum Sophal and his friend were very good: they had never been performed here before (and have not been performed here since). The dancers were young and there was a lot of interest in learning. The 1988 New Year celebration was held again at the Armory, and it drew many people. High School students and the adults of the Cambodian Association worked and even played together at the traditional New Year games, which made the New Year very exciting.

In 1989, leaders of the Cambodian Association decided to invite nationally known dancers and musicians from Maryland to perform. This group included Van Pok, Van Yan, and Chamroeun Yin, who later settled here. Originally known as the Khmer Classical Dance Troupe, the ensemble had been declared artistic refugees in 1981 and they came to America for a national tour before settling in the Washington, D.C. area. In this group were many exceptional musicians and dancers, some who learned classical and folk dance in the Thai refugee camp of Khao-I-Dang, and some who had been trained at the Universite des Beaux Arts in Phnom Penh before the Khmer Rouge regime took over. The

Irene Kho sprays perfume on the statue of Buddha, Khmer New Year, c. 1990. Photos: Thomas B. Morton

▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲

music and dancing were excellent. There was no party that year; the celebration was held at the Philadelphia Civic Center on April 22.

In 1990, New Year was again held at the Armory. Many South Philadelphia High School students helped plan and set up the traditional games. In this year, Mr. Chamroeun Yin, who had previously performed in Maryland moved to Philadelphia and began to teach classical dance. This year, the dances were performed especially well; also most of the classical dances presented had not yet been performed here before. The folk dances were also pretty good, with new dancers in the group, still led by Mrs. Phally Doung. 1990 was the last year of the big New Year celebrations held at the Armory.

Originally, in about 1986, our Cambodian Buddhist Temple was established in a rented building on South Seventh Street. In 1987, the Temple moved into a new and bigger building on Greenwich Street. At first there were many problems with the neighbors, who opposed our being there. But troubles developed inside the community as well. The Temple began to have their New Year separately from the Cambodian Association in 1991. Since then, the Temple celebrates the New Year in religious traditional ceremonies at the Temple, while a public celebration occurs elsewhere.

In 1991, Cambodian New Year was celebrated at Hai Tien Restaurant, at 16th and Washington Avenues, in South Philadelphia. Traditional religious ceremonies were held at the Temple during the day, and the Cambodian Association celebrated the New Year separately in the evening with musical bands, and folk and classical dance performances. People were divided and so it was not as much fun as the other years in the past, since the Cambodian Association and the Temple didn't get along. However, the traditional folk and classical dance performances were getting better each year: students were developing techniques, gaining much skill, and mastering more dances. Every year since Mr. Yin has been directing the classical troupe, there are always new dances performed, and new faces dancing. More Cambodian children are learning the dance, as well.

Mr. Our, who was President of the Cambodian Association in 1990 and 1991 said that he and other leaders have been concerned about safety at New Year celebrations from about 1987 on, but are generally happy because they feel that the celebration is getting better and better every year. "Starting in 1991," he said, "we had to change strategies. Before we didn't sell tickets. Instead, we asked for donations, but we never raised enough money to cover our costs for paying the rent for the place, supplies and a lot of other things. It cost so much money, that we decided to sell tickets." Dy Sokhoeun and Sokhom Chan both said that New Year celebrations cost a lot of money. Each year they have to pay for the teachers to teach Khmer literacy to Khmer children. As well, they need to find ways to support weekly classical and folk dance classes starting four months before New Year. They have to buy new costumes and new supplies every year. Cambodian Association members are not only donating time and energy, but also money from their own pockets to help make the New Year celebration a success. So, despite the great investment, when people see that the New Year celebration is successful, and growing they are very happy and feel that they have not been wasting their efforts at all.

—Leendavy Koung

PFP NEWS

Leap Koung and Koung Peang practiced lakhon. *for our filled-to-the rafters concert of Khmer music.*

Emergency Alert: As we go to press, we have just learned that the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts has dissolved its independent Folklife Program. Staff will stay in place and grants in folk arts will still be made, but under the aegis of the Crafts program. PCA's Folklife Program was the ONLY funding program in the Commonwealth specifically dedicated to folklife and designed to evaluate folklife projects by folklife-appropriate criteria (rather than in terms drawn from fine art worlds). While the funding provided was small, it has been critical to traditional artists and community groups. We ask for your letters encouraging the Council on the Arts to maintain an independent Folklife program. More detailed information will be available from our office; in the meantime, please call us or write: Ms. Carol Brown, Chair, PA Council on the Arts, Room 216 Finance Building, Harrisburg, PA 17120. THANKS.

Traditional Artists Roundtable: The Philadelphia Folklore Project and the Folklife Center of International House invite traditional artists and interested individuals to an informal discussion of needs and resources. What challenges do traditional artists share? What special needs do traditional artists have? Do we have common dreams for the future? How can we share our ideas and support one anothers' aims? How can local agencies support us? All are welcome. Jan 16th, 1-3 pm. Free. At the PFP, 719 Catharine St. RSVP: 238-0096.

Our Grants Workshop offers information sessions and individual appointments with folklorists and grants officers from funding agencies. Get useful information about funding for traditional arts and artists. Speakers include Christie Balka (PA Humanities Council), Linda Shopes (PA Historic & Museum Commission), Amy Skillman (PA Heritage Affairs Commission), Diane Sidener Young (PA Council on the Arts), and others. Hear and share ideas about how to plan projects and write grants. Free resource materials. Coffee and informal conversations all day. Group sessions are open to all, but spaces for individual appointments are limited and pre-registration is encouraged. (Last year, traditional artists and community groups who attended this workshop developed successful grants that brought in $47,000 in funding for their projects. Just as important, participants developed their abilities to plan and carry out folklife projects.) The workshop is designed for people with interest or skills in community-based traditions, including community organizers and workers, educators, traditional artists, and interested others: Feb. 18th, 9-4:30. $5 Free to PFP members. At the PFP, 719 Catharine St. RSVP: 238-0096.

Thank you, thank you to so many of you for joining and for renewing membership in the PFP. Your support makes all the difference, and we are deeply grateful to you: Rita C. Altman, Julie Baranauskas, Jane & H.P. Beck, Philip Bertocci, Marietta P. Boyer, W. Cederholm, Margie Chambers, R. Craik, Mary Anna DeRenzi, Constance Dry, Marjorie Dugan, Diane Eacret, Jules Epstein, Robert Eskind, Mariella Esposito, April Frantz, Ann Furstenberg, Henry Glassie, Dolores & Luis Gmitter, Renee Goldstein, Andrea Graham, Milt Gross, Beverly Haas, Nancy Hall, Miriam Hershberger, Thora Jacobson, Neslihan Jevremovic, Kensington Joint Action Council, Jerome Kaplan, Jerome & Anne Kaplan, Marc Kaufman, Robert Kendrick & Karel Kilimnik, Edith Klausner, Thomas S. Kramer, Connie Kurtiz, Mark Lecher, Albert LeCoff, Dee Lewis, Sarah Lytle, E. Ann Matter, Joseph C. Miller, Rita Moonsammy, ODUNDE, Carol A. Parssinen, Binh Pham, Jaime Pullen & Michael Blasnik, Barbara Rachubinski, David Rahdert, Peter Reed, Valerie Richardson, Michèle Richman, Marlene Santoyo, Richard & Ethel Saunders, Rosario Sauro, Rev. Vincent Saverino, JoAnn Seaver, Shoba Sharma, Janet Sholl, Ellen Skilton, Linda Herskowitz & Ken Solway, Lori Ginzberg & Joel Steiker, Nan Langen Steketee, Neville Strumpf, Surihu, John Suter, Raul Torres, Kay Turner & Mary Sanger, R. Walls, Charles Welch, Jr., Mary Alice Whelan, Chamroeun Yin, Vang Yong, Katherine Young, and Joseph M. Zinni. **Very special thanks** to generous patrons and benefactors Virginia Briscoe, Steven & Barbara Gold, Jim Griffith, Germaine Ingram, Kathryn Morgan, Samien Nol, Malachi & Bonnie O'Conner, Shalom Staub, Clare Yellin, Marian Yellin, the Janet Fleisher Gallery, and Special Effects Silk Screen Printing (for the wonderful PFP caps!). **We are grateful to** The Pew Charitable Trusts, NEA-Folk Arts, PA Council on the Arts, PA Humanities Council, Philadelphia Foundation, the Samuel Fels Fund, Philadelphia Folksong Society, CoreStates for their support.

Looking at Tom Morton's photo-graphs (We extended the show an extra month to respond to your interest. Thanks!)

Joe Soo Kim and So Yun Chun (pictured in the exhibition) gave photographer Tom Morton flowers at the September opening. Mary Cousar looked on.

Photos: Jane Levine

WORKS IN PROGRESS

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About the Philadelphia Folklore Project

We are committed to paying attention to the fundamental ways in which people organize, understand, and share their experiences and knowledge.... We consider that our ways of expression—our symbols, rituals, arts and stories—are our most basic ways of representing our own truths and perspectives, our most fundamental ways of exploring our own experiences and, ultimately, a powerful means for controlling our own destinies. We're six years old this year—and we're an independent public folklife agency with local roots, scholarly perspectives, activist programs, and a commitment to taking arts and culture seriously. We assist artists and communities, conduct research, develop exhibitions, offer public programs, workshops and technical assistance, maintain an archive, and issue publications and resources. If you value our work, please join us. And tell your friends.

Become a Philadelphia Folklore Project Member and we'll give you our cap!

▸ **$1-$10 Student/fixed income.** A donation in any amount will get you PFP news (quarterly news briefs to members only), issues of *Works in Progress*, invitations to ourevents, and public thanks

▸ **$25 Individual.** Receive all the above benefits as well as reduced admission to PFP events, your own copy of one of our books Philadelphia Folklife Resources: A Guide to Local Traditions or *Uses of Tradition: Arts of Italian Americans in Philadelphia*, 25% discount on PFP publications, a free set of PFP postcards., and the CAP off our heads!

▸ **$35 Family.** (2 or more of you at the same address). All of the above benefits, with reduced admissions for everyone at your address.

▸ **$60 Contributing.** Receive all the above benefits, and one more of our great books: our *Guide*, *Uses of Tradition*, or *Stand By Me*. ($15 tax-deductible)

▸ **$150 Supporting.** Receive all of the above benefits, two folklife posters suitable for framing, your choice of a PFP video, and free admission to our annual Folk Art Auction. ($50 tax deductible)

▸ **$250 Benefactor.** Receive all of the above benefits, an invitation to a special benefactor's meal, a tour of a private folk art collection, and our eternal gratitude! ($125 tax deductible)

▸ **$500 Angel.** Receive all of the above benefits and a framed photograph of an image from the PFP archive. ($250 tax deductible).

▸ **PLEDGE:** I wish to pledge $______ per month to the PFP.

The PFP is registered with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as a charitable organization. A copy of the official registration and financial information may be obtained from the PA Dept. of State by calling toll free, within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

Yes, I support local folklife!

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WORKS IN PROGRESS

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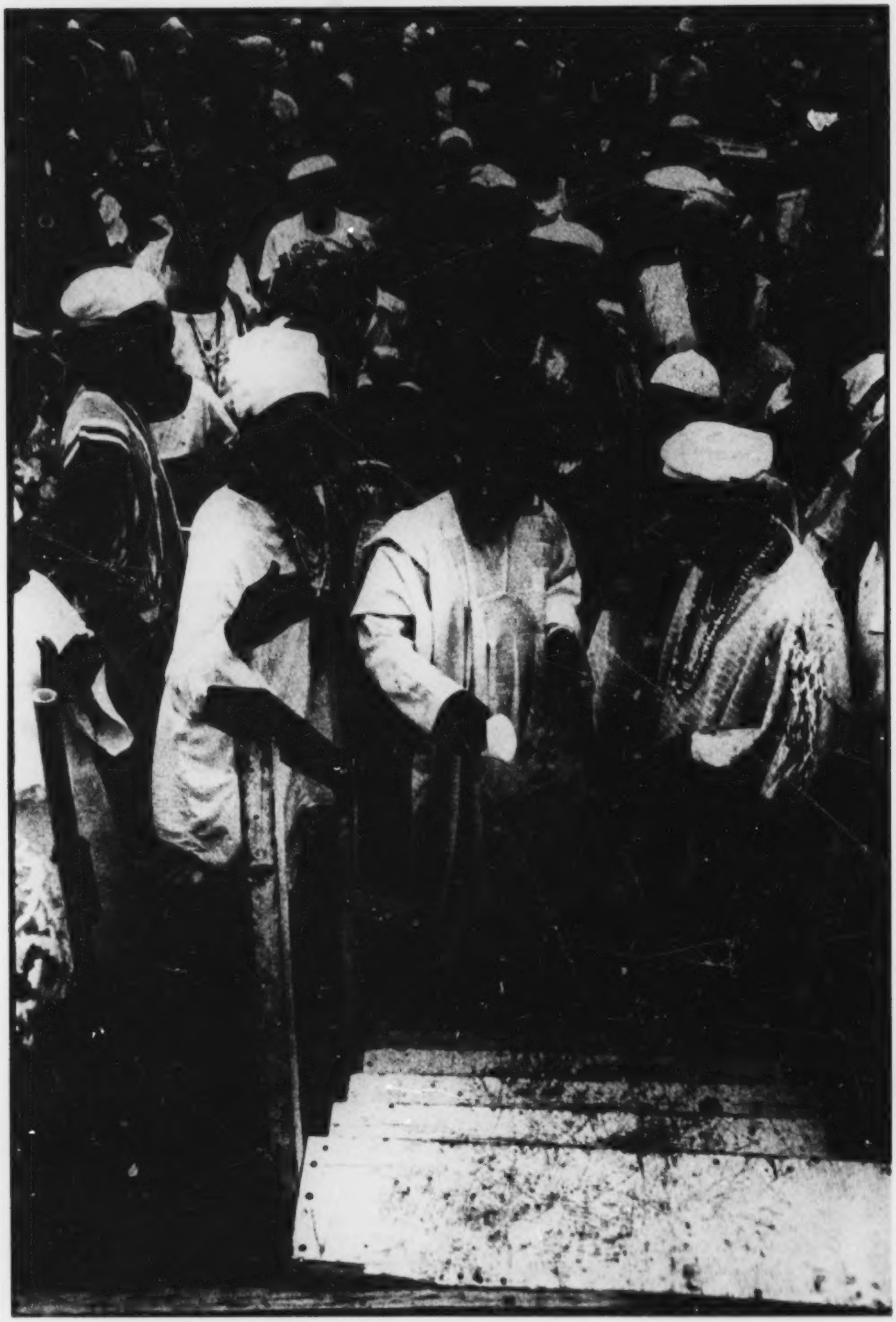
ODUNDE issue



Returning from the river, Babatunde Olatunji pours libations on the steps to the stage. ODUNDE, c. 1984. Photo: Thomas B. Morton

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Introduction: the ODUNDE African American festival, its roots and relations

▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼

L-R : Olatunji and the police officer (see story to right), c. 1984.

▼

"Odunde" is a Yoruba holiday greeting

▼

Locally, "Odunde" is translated as "happy new year."

▼

ODUNDE is an 18-year old African American street festival occurring this year on June 13th.

▼

ODUNDE is a grassroots educational and cultural organization.

This special joint newsletter, part of a collaboration between ODUNDE and the Philadelphia Folklore Project, is the first public report on our ongoing collaborative effort to document African American folk arts and institutions in South Philadelphia. We have begun this project for two reasons. First, we are aware that annually the ODUNDE festival faces opposition from some who would like to see it moved. It is our hope that our research can begin to clarify reasons for ODUNDE's rootedness, for the depth of claims upon and feelings for the neighborhood that many African Americans have, and for the significance of the ODUNDE festival for our community overall. Secondly, we undertake this project to fill some of the gaps in the published and public record of African American peoples' lives and experiences in this neighborhood from 1945 to the present. Folklore—the word on the streets, what people say, passed-on words—contradicts many common assumptions about the social history and artistic traditions of South Philadelphia. We believe that it is critical that we record the perspectives and wisdom of the activists and artists who have in different ways fought to preserve and sustain African American culture in the face of enormous obstacles and often at great cost.

In these pages, people remind us that South Street's foremost "renaissance" can be dated (not as is often done, to the 1960s) but a good thirty to forty years before the in-migration of largely white artists, to the days when African American clubs and dance halls supported a thriving cultural scene.

It is often noted that Philadelphia was home to many nationally-known artists and performers, including Marian Anderson, Ethel Waters, Dizzy Gillespie, Pearl Bailey, Reverend Tindley, Jessie and Arthur Fauset, Judith Jamison and others. The essays on Philadelphia's hand drumming tradition and Sydney King's dance school remind us of the legacies of other artists, sometimes less well-known outside the community. These are individuals who, conscious of the limits that commercial or elite arts often impose, purposefully chose to work in vernacular or roots traditions, or to explore ways to combine political activism and cultural integrity, along the way widening the possibilities for the larger community.

Overall, scholarly works on Philadelphia African American history and culture have tended primarily to concentrate on the 17th to the 19th centuries, on the accomplishments of prominent people and organizations, or on macro-level approaches. W.E.B. DuBois observed in 1890 that the largely African American seventh ward boasted more than 100 social institutions (including "mother" churches, mutual aid organizations, secret societies, and social and labor organizations), but little attention has been paid to grassroots culture-making institutions which have historically provided people in the African American community with vital and viable alternatives to mainstream organizations and political processes. The ODUNDE festival is an important example of such a grassroots institution. It has been in the vanguard of African American cultural developments, but from the beginning ODUNDE founders were deeply aware of the many antecedents to their festival and this project has begun to explore the meanings of some of these precedents.

Last year, with the support of the Samuel Fels Fund and the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, we began to circulate questionnaires and to begin interviews. We initially asked about occasions that brought people together, and learned about Victory parties, the Elks Parade, the O.V. Catto, the Halloween parade, Daddy Grace, rent parties, PAL league games and dances, the Lincoln Post, May processions, public dances, balls, clubs, cabarets and much more—including the great struggles of the last fifty years within which these institutions developed. Some excerpts from interviews (conducted by Karen Buchholz, Nomalanga Dalili, Stephanie Felix, Lois Fernandez, and Debora Kodish) are included in these pages. We especially want to thank Thomas B. Morton, John Roberts, and Karen Warrington for their great contributions to this collaborative effort.

This project is continuing, and we encourage you to let us know about your own memories and experiences. (Call us at the PFP at 238-0096, or at ODUNDE at 732-8508). We also encourage you to support both of our organizations: these are hard times for grassroots groups and your donations will make a big difference. To that end, membership forms are included on the last page. Finally, we hope that you enjoy this year's ODUNDE!

—Lois Fernandez, ODUNDE
—Debora Kodish, Philadelphia
Folklore Project

▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲

Olatunji sprays rum during rituals for Elegba. Photos: Thomas B. Morton

An ODUNDE portfolio: photographer's statement

Everywhere else I've visited in the African diaspora, the people have continued both sacred and secular public musical traditions which reinfuse their drumming. What we were missing here in Philadelphia was a regular forum for secular public music based on the drum—like the music of a yearly carnival or weekly rumbas—in the neighborhoods where we live. Our African American community festivals in recent years have been filling that void.

What immediately drew me to ODUNDE was that I felt very at home there. Everyplace I had gone in the Americas—Puerto Rico, Panama, Peru, Columbia, Ecuador, Haiti and the Dominican Republic— whatever differences that divided us were eliminated. Somehow, ODUNDE brought together all the common elements: absence of boundaries between performer and spectator, integrating the sacred and secular, emphasis on the power of the drum, involvement of folks of all ages, ideologies and class backgrounds—and all of this within an African context.

And it even used the batá in a way that felt right for Philadelphia, for us. The batá are originally Nigerian drums but they are being used in an African-Cuban way at ODUNDE. It really highlights the African-ness of it all.

ODUNDE
AFRI

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Signs

ODUNDE brought everything together in an unself-conscious, non-pretentious way. Culturally, visually, intellectually, and emotionally, ODUNDE was a satisfying experience. I wanted both to understand and to contribute to ODUNDE in some way. My most immediate response was to use the medium of photography. I have taken photographs at every ODUNDE festival since about 1978. I originally attempted to capture "that one ODUNDE moment." Actually, many moments stand out for me. This one story suggests the power that the event holds:

Going down to the river at the beginning of ODUNDE is always an intense experience. The atmosphere is thick with expectation. Every year there's some feeling of tension at the beginning.

One year, on the way to the river, at every street corner Babatunde Olatunji stopped and did a short ceremony to Elegba, the Yoruba deity of the crossroads. He put rum in his mouth, lifted his head and sprayed it in four different directions. When he came to one corner, where the police were stationed, he went directly up to one officer. Everyone was watching in suspense. The officer apparently didn't know what was going on. Olatunji went up to him and I don't know if he was talking to him in English or in Yoruba, but the officer seemed to be paying attention. Olatunji touched him, and sprayed the rum around him. The officer could have completely gone into a confrontational or defensive mode, but he didn't. Maybe because he was African American he somehow knew that he wasn't being threatened or disrespected. By the time Olatunji had finished, the officer was smiling. Once the ritual was finished, then the procession continued. If you knew the characteristics of the Orishas, then you knew what was going on. Olatunji was making peace with Oggun—the Yoruba deity of iron and war. He was asking for permission. The officer's (Oggun's) positive reaction was key to the encounter. Now, Olatunji, since he is Nigerian, there were certain barriers that he just walked right through, but the message—the non-threatening respectful message—was so clear that the officer just smiled. And peace was assured.

This is the kind of ODUNDE moment I want to capture on film.

—Thomas B. Morton

Origins: why we shall not be moved

In about 1963, I met some Yorubas at the Christian Street YMCA. They were giving a program and the first time I saw them there—African people dressed in African traditional clothes—it moved me. It opened my eyes. We ended up establishing a relationship with them. In the months that followed, we went to their Temple at 116th Street in New York City, where the group was located. We joined them in going to the river in Harlem. It was the first time that I had participated in such a ceremony.

In the summer of 1966, my sister Sylvia Green, my cousin Gerri Fernandez, my friend Ruth Arthur and I opened the Uhuru Hut at 500 South 23rd Street. The Hut was an African Boutique offering African clothes, jewelry and fine arts, and it was one of the first shops of its kind in the country. We were all in our late 20s and early 30s, and the shop was the coming together of our ideas that because of peoples' rising consciousness, there was a place for such a boutique. We felt sure that it could appeal to masses of people. All of us had our roots in South Philadelphia. Ruth grew up in the immediate area. And so we found a place and opened it.

Ruth Arthur was one of the primary dressmakers for the shop, and one day she and I were walking by the triangle where 23rd St., South St. and Gray's Ferry converged. We began to imagine the possibilities of the place, saying to each other, "What a place to have something." We talked about what it would be like to have some kind of gathering there, for people in the neighborhood. We didn't know what at that time, what shape it might take, or what it would be. We just thought it ought to be. So that was the first time.

I went to Oshugbo, Nigeria in 1972, and met Twin Seven Seven, a reknowned Nigerian artist and he told me of the annual festival that they had there in honor of Oshun, the goddess of the river, and he took me to the river. My mind went back to the Yorubas in New York and to what Ruth and I had talked about, and I realized, "Well, we have a river. We're between two rivers. That's what we could do."

Three years later, opportunity presented itself. I saw this flyer in my office (I was working for the Department of Public Welfare) and I read this flyer about the "Philadelphia Renaissance," where the city was encouraging groups to do projects which linked city beautification to celebration of the spring. I thought, "Why can't we do an African American event? Why can't we go to the river?"

Well, there was so much apprehension. People said it would never work. They said, "Who's going to allow you?" People thought we were never going to cross that South Street bridge. People said, "They're not going to shut down traffic and let you go across that bridge, not for Black folks. They're not going to let you throw fruits off the bridge." In addition, there was a great deal of apprehension that such an event would not be able to take place because of the prevalence of various gangs in the area. At that time, we were still in the middle of gang war. Our mission was to convince community folks that we could have a cultural event that would bring our people together based on culture alone, and that could be healing, rewarding and long-lasting in the midst of this despair. We never thought of this as a one-shot deal. And I was a gang worker at the time. I knew the rhythm of the gangs. I knew we could do it. Afterwards, people said, "I wouldn't have believed it if I hadn't been there." And that was such a dream, such a thing. It was such a good feeling—and such a feeling of oneness.

But anyhow, we did it. And once the festival took place, it was beautiful and peaceful and the feedback from the community was tremendous.

That first ODUNDE (we called it the Oshun festival then) was small. We used the store, Uhuru Hut, then at 2214 South Street, as a sponsor. Even a week ago, a neighbor said to me, "It was so small that first year, it was just us, just the neighbors and the next year, it exploded, and it has been exploding ever since." And that was such a wonderful compliment, it just seemed to me.

We had our girls. Women were involved from SWCCCC, Southwest Center City Citizen's Council. We involved everybody. That morning everybody came to my house to get dressed, to give the kids a sense of belonging. We gave them culture. My sister xeroxed the song "Odunde," and as we left the house we were singing. Arthur Hall was with us and his group. The officiating priest at the first ODUNDE was Obailumi Ogunseye—one of the very Yoruba who we had met at the Christian Street Y back in 1963 and then my brother-in-law. My sister, Omowunmi, was also central to the festival. Our kids from the neighborhood were part of the program for one day: doing karate, drills, dance and other of our own folk arts. Anyway, it grew. And one of the mothers wrote a letter about ODUNDE recently to the editor of the *Daily News*, saying "Now we bring our kids. . .leave it where it is."

When ODUNDE started, the area was predominately African American—from Lombard and certainly South of South Street—and it had been been a middle-class/working-class African American area for roughly the previous two generations. At one time in the 1970s, John Coates of the South Central Neighborhood Action Committee was able to boast that the area was 80% African American home-owner occupied.

But by the late 1970s and early 1980s, things had changed. Major struggles over land and property—part of larger struggles regarding political control and power over what was becoming an increasingly valuable neighborhood close to Center City—also had an enormous impact on the shape, direction, and future of the community. The Crosstown Expressway (intended to link Interstates 76 and 95) was initially planned to cut through the area, and while the Expressway was ultimately defeated by a coalition of citizens, it still resulted in the massive destruction of a viable business corridor on South Street, as store-owners sold out or left. The fate of South Street west of Broad was taken out of the hands of the neighborhood people and small family-business owners and effectively left to a new group of people: developers, speculators, the ever-expanding Graduate Hospital, and individual property-owners—largely newcomers, white, and gentry. Urban renewal money (called black removal money on the streets) made it possible for speculators to buy up large clusters of housing stock. Few sources of funds were available to help long-time residents. At that time, local activists clearly saw the writing on the wall: these wholesale changes were effectively undermining the African American community's ability to sustain itself. Added to this, older people were dying, and their children, able to live outside predominately African American neighborhoods because of the hard-won civil rights, housing and employment battles, often chose to move away.

Against the backdrop of these large-scale political and social changes—and exactly during the times that they were happening—ODUNDE counterposed a grassroots, fundamentally local, and African-centered perspective. While not explicitly political, ODUNDE quickly became an important vehicle for a sense of community: people came, they came in greater and greater numbers, they brought their families, they made it their own. Combining the features of a block party with scheduled performances and organized vendors, the festival simply "felt right."

For nearly ten years, the festival grew to near-universal acclaim. The absence of problems—the festival has never had any major disruptions or incidents—has been remarkable. Community members continue to turn out, and ODUNDE's popular African marketplace and day-long performances annually draw people from around the city and the wider region. From the start, the crowd has been diverse and peaceful: people wore "city garb and the colorful fabrics of Africa" according to the *Bulletin* in 1975. But by 1984, festival founders experienced the first organized opposition when a handful of residents from the 2300 block of Naudain Street presented a petition stating that the ODUNDE festival should be moved. Opposition has continued to escalate since that time, with committee-persons, city officials, departments of licensing and inspection and a host of others annually raising the same issues, year after year.

Objections have been: that this "type" of festival should not occur in a residential neighborhood, that the festival is (in various ways) "dirty," and that it has "outgrown" its location, drawing too many people. But double standards abound both in evaluating the so-called problems with ODUNDE and in measuring its strengths. Some of the same complaints have been made about other Philadelphia parades without anyone suggesting that they move. The huge numbers of people who come to ODUNDE (and spend money) are somehow not counted as providing economic benefit to the city. The inconvenience of some neighbors one day a year seems a small price to pay for maintaining what is now the oldest continuously running African American community festival in this city, in an historically significant African American neighborhood. ODUNDE comes out of a tradition of African American culture-making, but it fused elements of vernacular festivity, thereby contributing to the vanguard of a cultural movement. Mixing the idea of a block party with performances and organized vendors, ODUNDE inspired imitations in Delaware and elsewhere; people began using and then building on the ODUNDE pattern. A new market, with its own seasons, that pumps money into the African American community, is emerging, and ODUNDE continues to play a pivotal role. People need to understand all of this.

This essay opened with an origin narrative: an account of the founding of ODUNDE, including a description of the vision which inspired the festival and the values that orient it, with comments on some of the obstacles overcome in bringing ODUNDE forward. The obstacles continue to arise and this newsletter is written in the belief that they will continue to be overcome. For the story of ODUNDE is part of a larger struggle for cultural resistance and survival that is in many ways the narrative of our time.

—Lois Fernandez

Getting the Egungun from the Ishangi family ready, with Akweley (to right) and Jackie Corley assisting, c. 1990. Photo: Thomas B. Morton

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Testimonies

Clockwise from bottom left:

Doctor Scuddie and Sarah McGee, presiding elders.

Lois Fernandez with Kulemele dancers.

Greg Jarmin pours honey at the crossroads for Elegba.

Bob Thompson, ready to make an offering to Oshun.

Oshun's offering, South St. Bridge.

Skobi and Bob Thompson preparing the offering for Oshun, c. 1990.

Photos: Thomas B. Morton

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To me, South Philadelphia was beautiful. That's why I've worked so hard. I'm trying to get that closeness and that care—because people really cared about people then. You know, and people did things collectively. You see, I grew up with a value that was taught to me by my father . . . he was from North Carolina, and you can't say that a hard time makes people cruel and hateful. It made him very sensitive and affectionate. Like my brother said, my mother and father did social work when people didn't know what social work was. O.K., my mother did day work. She used to bring food home and give it to people. When people gave her clothing, she'd give it to people. That same company over there at 12th and Washington Avenue—Ruggieri—is the same company that sold coal at fifty cents a bushel. And my father used to buy bushels of coal and take it across the tracks to people that had children that didn't have no coal. OK? So that's why I say, when they talk about poor—I mean, look, we always had something to share. And we grew up with that value. And when I was growing up, we played around in Annin Street. And somebody'd say "Come on in here and wash your hands," and they'd give you some lemonade and cookies and put you back out on the street. —Mamie Nichols

House rent parties. Do I know about them. Well girl, you cooked. Friday nights and Saturday nights. And they had a red light in the living room and you danced close. This was before the jitterbug. And people lived for house rent parties. That was the big thing. You got dressed to go to them. Some people met their husbands and wives at house rent parties. South Philadelphia was famous for them. In fact, my sister helped raise my two children on house rent parties. And in those parties, you could go into another room and play craps or cards. And the house lady or man would cut the game. That means they would get a certain percentage of the winnings. And honey, they would fry chicken and collard greens and corn on the cob. Just good dinners. People would even come to house rent parties and order food and take it home. That's the truth. And you cooked. And people would pay $2.00 to get in and you'd get your money from the pitchers of whisky that you'd sell, even if it was white whisky, that's the illegal kind.

And after the two nights, you'd have your rent. The next week it was your electric and your gas. The following week it was the coal for the furnace and of course food on the table.

And I can go back even before there was electric. For years, they'd come to our house. Every Friday and every Saturday. Year in and year out.—Isabelle Fambro

When I came up, you had dancers on certain corners who were always dancing. They'd be out there all day long if the weather was good. Especially dancers, because this is what they did. They would meet on certain corners with what they knew how to do and see what another dancer was doing and they'd try to communicate like that. And it was almost like getting to know them—but through their dancing. And you have to know that in certain parts of the city they didn't allow street performers. Walnut, Locust, especially Chestnut, they wouldn't allow street performers. Merchants would be complaining. But now you can go anywhere.—LaVaughn Robinson

Now there was a parade on Halloween and people used to congregate by Pep's and the Showboat to watch. South Street would be filled with people. All the way down South Street from 3rd or so to 18th, gays were filling the streets, really dressed. It was like the mummers. We called it "prancing." They would promenade up the street. And people watching were dressed in finery, too. People walked along playing the blues, everything was blues then. You could hear saxophones all night. It was mostly gay men and people had on some fine clothes. You know gay and straight came together more than black and white in those days. But performers saw things differently anyhow. —Isabelle Fambro

It was a rare thing to see whites on South Street from 1925 on. And South Street was the street. South Street was our Lenox Avenue. "On South Street"—that song went right around the country. But things changed in the 1960s. Once things

are gone, they're gone. And there were so many clubs. There was a big dance hall on Broad Street—the Strand Ballroom. Hurricane Hazel blew it away. Claudette's—it used to be called Skip's Lounge, right near the Royal Theater. Then there was the Harlem Club. There was Hotel Horseshoe where "Mom" Heavilow used to feed the musicians when they came into town. And there were so many others. And Billie Holiday was right there at 15th and Bainbridge, at the Emerson. And at Broad and Lombard, at the Drummers' Club, underneath the Horseshoe all the name jazz bands, the big stars used to come. At Pep's, I went to see Aretha Franklin. Lionel Hampton played at the Budweiser's at 16th and South. There was all the music and art you could want and the biggest of stars. Ethel Waters played White's Wonder Inn at 18th and Federal. It's still right there. I played there, too. We all played there. —Isabelle Fambro

Now there was a woman, Mrs. Heavilow, and she had a beautiful home, because you see, black entertainers couldn't go to hotels. And in that house I used to look down on Duke Ellington, and Jimmy Lunsford, the Nicholas Brothers and Count Basie—I used to look down on their heads and on beautiful chorus girls, too. And my mother used to go down there and help her prepare their supper after the shows. And Ms. Heavilow's grandson Leroy and I had to stay upstairs. We weren't allowed down—we had to stay upstairs and look through the heat register.

Now, from my understanding from growing up, and just from hearsay stories, passed-on stories, Mrs. Heavilow owned a lot of property and she didn't know the system and from the talk, the city sent her crazy by taking all that property from her. Because she owned a lot of property up on Montrose Street where they built the projects. Well, ***then*** people didn't know. And she had a beautiful home there on 12th Street, in the 700 block. The level of sophistication now is greater. The Graduate Hospital was going to move out to West Philadelphia and Mr. Moore, Susan Pettiway, Mrs. Bowden, Margaret Robinson who's deceased and Mr. Washington who is deceased, they went up there meeting after meeting after meeting after meeting. But early history was we begged for them to stay here and look where they are now: Graduate Place. And how many poor black persons can afford those apartments and town houses today? If people were afforded the same opportunites, a number of people would have been able to stay on South Street and keep their businesses and homes. All this fighting that we do, we still end up with nothing. There needs to be a change.—Mamie Nichols

"The right to assemble:" African American uses of public space

For ten of the last eighteen years, the organizers of the ODUNDE festival have resisted attempts to move ODUNDE out of its neighborhood of origin, away from an historically significant African American neighborhood, and off the South Street Bridge where offerings are made to Oshun. Exclusions, harassment and inattention to African American public gatherings during the last fifty years suggest historical reference points for the controversy over the site for the ODUNDE festival.

The South Street area in Philadelphia represents one of the oldest free African American communities in the nation, dating to the 17th century. This neighborhood was already home to the city's established black elite when the great migration of rural southern blacks doubled the city's black population between 1900 and 1920. The main African American settlement still ran along South Street, extending northward to Spruce Streets and westward from 7th Street to the Schuylkill River. "South Street belonged to blacks, from 22nd to 10th Street," said one-time South Philadelphia resident Isabelle Fambro and her comments are echoed by many others. For generations, this neighborhood has held central importance in the history of African Americans in Philadelphia, and people emphasize their freedom to gather, move, and mingle within this space. "The neighborhood is an extended family," commented Lois Fernandez. Similarly, others remarked on the importance of the street to community cohesiveness: "The street is like our meeting hall. When we can't go in the street, we can't function."

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Greetings at ODUNDE

Though it claimed other titles, Philadelphia in the 1940s and 1950s was still "a city of segregated neighborhoods." How the city has officially and unofficially dealt with different African American parades and public celebrations should be considered in this context. Access to streets, stores, public parks, and public swimming pools was severely restricted by Jim Crow. People describe recurring physical violence and intimidation both in neighboring white communities and on some occasions when they marched in parades. Many commented that "the Pocket" at 26th and South was "full of racism today as it was in its past." "You don't go there." Similarly, Market Street was out of bounds. "Well it was set aside for the white folks, that's all," said Elizabeth Ransom, "you know, just like they're taking over South Street now . . . Say from Lombard Street on back was ours [then]." African American public events sometimes put participants at risk, and certainly were little understood by the white community. Parade marchers recall being stoned by white youth, or pelted with garbage.

Only the most elite, prestigious and powerful African American groups—among them the Elks Club and the United House of Prayer—regularly organized parades on Broad Street. The Improved Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of the World, a fraternal order made up largely of black middle-class and professional men, established a Philadelphia chapter in 1903, and by the 1940s, the Elks building at 16th and Fitzwater Streets, the O.V. Catto Lodge, actively hosted a wide range of social events. An important force in the community, the Elks occasionally hosted the national convention in August, with a massive parade representing not just Elks but a spectrum of African American occupational and social groups. The *Bulletin* reported in 1931 that in their brilliant-colored uniforms and purple fezzes, and the white, purple, and blue silk of the women's auxiliaries," the Elks resembled a huge purple-blue streak winding through the city" to those looking down from the office buildings. Other Elks lodges around the city organized smaller neighborhood parades which loom large in peoples' memories.

The Elks' largest showing, a war bond rally in 1945, brought together 65 lodges and 39 marching bands. In addition, marching contingents of African American State Guardsmen, soldiers and sailors, police and other workers created an impressive black presence on Broad Street. According to the *Bulletin*, a record 200,000 spectators lined the parade route along Broad from Carpenter in South Philadelphia all the way north to Columbia Avenue. A short trip on Broad from Bainbridge to Walnut was part of the usual route of the United House of Prayer. The "Daddy Grace" parades (as these were popularly called) ended by marching through the elite African American neighbor-

Philadelphia
FOLKLORE
PROJECT

June 1993

Dear Friend of the Philadelphia Folklore Project,

We are writing to ask for your help. In the pages of our newsletters, you've read about the projects we've undertaken, the hard issues we've raised and joined, the artists we've supported. The need for solid, substantive, folklife perspectives continues and for the coming year we have planned a full slate: expanded workshops; an exhibition of Khmer folk art; continuation of the Law and Culture Project which works to enhance the equity of legal proceedings; continued advocacy and technical support services for traditional artists; a community concert featuring African American hand-drumming traditions; apprenticeships (including some on African American rhythm tap); and residencies and after school folk arts classes for children. Most of these programs are offered for free and we want to keep it that way.

But at this point, we face a $18,000 shortfall that puts both current and these future programs at risk.

As a courtesy, and in the interest of supporting artists and keeping you informed, we have been sending out a portion of our yearly mailings (including newsletters like this one) to many for free. We just can't afford to do this any more. Mailing and printing costs have increased steadily: together it costs $10 for a year's mailings to a single person (for postage and printing costs alone, *excluding* staff and photo costs). Paying members receive a minimum of three 16-page newsletters and five news briefs annually. After considerable reflection and with much regret we realize that we can afford to mail the full complement of newsletters and announcements only to those who can renew or begin membership *at some level*. 4,000 people now receive our mailings: if all of you make an annual contribution in some amount we'll be on much firmer footing.

This is a hard step to take for us and we are reluctant to strike names from our list without hearing from you. If you are one of the exalted few who have made a contribution within the last year, please accept our undying gratitude. (If not, you'll find a mark on your label). In any case, could you take a moment to look at the list on the back of this page and check off any and all categories that apply? Now is an important time to make your support felt: thanks to a challenge grant from the Philadelphia Foundation, any money you send will generate substantial matching funds for us. *Both your support and your feedback are extremely important to us.* We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Germaine Ingram
Germaine Ingram
Board Co-chair

Clare Yellin
Clare Yellin
Board Co-Chair

Karen Buchholz
Program Director

Debora Kodish
Director

719 Catharine St.
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(215) 238-0096

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☐ I have had a change of heart. Enclosed is a check for _________ to renew my membership.(See below for sliding rate scale)

☐ I have contributed within the year, but now I'm persuaded to contribute again! Enclosed is a check for _________.

☐ I still want to keep hearing from you, but am facing my own financial shortfall. I would, however, consider::

- ___ lending muscle power when PFP moves its files to a downstairs office, sometime this summer
- ___ occasionally donating time to help with Xeroxing, collating, or mailings
- ___ offering pro bono services (please call us first!)
- ___ offering office, art or photographic equipment (call first!)

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Please mail to : The Philadelphia Folklore Project, 719 Catharine St., Phila., PA 19147. Thanks!

Two drummers (Facundo and John Wilkie) meet in the crowd.

hood along Christian Street, west of Broad.

Besides these few parades, as Isabelle Fambro points out, effectively "no blacks were on Broad Street." The O.V. Catto brass band, the only African American group that has marched for 65 years on Broad Street as part of the Mummers parade had to share the street with white marchers who wore deeply offensive blackface or dressed in costumes depicting racist stereotypes. (Blackface was finally banned in 1964, because of legal action brought by African American community members). And people recall that African American spectators watched the Mummers' parade on Broad Street at their peril. Lois Fernandez recalled that "If we were watching the parade, at different times the Mummers in blackface would march up to us and make racist remarks and provoke fights with us." Overall, black presences on Broad Street were discouraged, or carried mixed messages, to say the least.

Civic authorities assigned to provide services to African American public events in black neighborhoods often had little understanding of the traditions they witnessed. People recall numerous incidents of disrespect. The United House of Prayer at Sixteenth and Fitzwater held mass baptisms outside its church. Elizabeth Ransom recalled her discomfort: "They would take that big hose and . . . he (Daddy Grace) would be up there on that thing. The ladies would have on their white dresses, and you know, when all that water hit them . . . you could see everything, and the white firemen would be laughing. They got their kicks out of it." Looking back, Clara Bryant said, "We didn't have a decent place to baptize."

South Philadelphians recall literally hundreds of African American parades and public gatherings operating without official sanction. Pender McCall remembers that small parades —local drum and bugle corps, like the Lincoln Post at 19th and Federal, and drill teams from Baltimore and Washington, D.C.—marched almost weekly in South Philadelphia. Outdoor events in local neighborhoods presumably took place without street permits. At any rate, Fambro remembers, "the police didn't bother us." Katrina Hazzard-Gordon argues in her book *Jookin'* that urban jook joints were better able to nurture and support African American cultural and artistic forms precisely because they operated outside official notice. What was true of the jooks was probably true of a wide variety of outdoor cultural events.

For nearly a century now, the city's tendency has been to uproot neighborhood cultural events, and to encourage their removal to wider, bigger, and allegedly more congenial public spaces near the center of town. But African American parades and processions historically have provided ways to define (and sometimes test and redefine) community boundaries. People in West Philadelphia tell stories of the few times that the Elks Parade, originating on the North Side of Market Street, home of the Moon gang, marched south into Barbary Coast gang territory, leaving streetcorner fights in its wake. In parts of the city, including South Philadelphia, some parish churches still continue the tradition of religious saints' day processions through the streets, in which parishioners carry sacred statues (or May poles as Lois Fernandez recalls of St. Mary's Episcopal in the 1950s), marking the geographic limits of the parish in the process.

ODUNDE's resolute commitment to staying in its original site is a reminder, as are the examples above, that neighborhoods are not interchangeable. Community-rooted festivals bring people and their dollars to neighborhoods. In contrast, parades that march down the central spaces of the city—the Parkway, Broad Street, Chestnut Street—draw crowds, media attention, and dollars to the city's political, bureaucratic, and financial centers of power. While it may be easier for the city to serve and manage such events, and to promote them to tourists, this represents yet another strategy of disinvestment in neighborhoods.

Resting under the trees at ODUNDE.

Photos: Thomas B. Morton

ODUNDE is heir to a long and vital tradition of deeply African American festival gatherings. It brings a remarkably diverse range of people together, in a space that is historically African American and to which many have roots. But is also heir to a complex and problematic history in which African American community gatherings have been discouraged in the more public and central of the city's spaces, and in which (officially and unofficially, legally and illegally) African American uses of public space and access to services within spaces, have been restricted. Over time, the South Street area has become, as Lois Fernandez says, "our Mecca, our hub." Against this background, campaigns to move ODUNDE from South Street cannot be tolerated.

—Karen Buchholz

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The Drum Preferred

It is no accident that, recalling memorable occasions of their youth, so many African Americans describe themselves as called, caught, drawn by the sound of drumbeats on the air, and running after the sounds of the Elks Parade or the Lincoln Post as the groups paraded down Broad Street, Girard Avenue, Vine Street. For Leonard "Doc" Gibbs, Thomas B. Morton, Kenneth Dossar and a score of other men now in their forties, the memories of the first times they followed the drum are important; each has continued to follow the drum as part of their artistic, musical, intellectual and spiritual lives. From the 1940s to the present, the drummers in parades through the city's African American neighborhoods have beat out a variety of rhythms and those beats have a significant history.

It is well-known that the musicians of sub-Saharan Africa devised intricate percussive systems. Although each African society possesses qualities unique unto itself, certain common aspects of the art of drumming form the basis for cultural unity across the diverse societies. The ubiquity of drum ensembles, the essential polyrhythmic quality of the indigenous music, and the explicit linkage of drums with song, dance and other expressive forms are central to the creative traditions of Africa. Even today, hand drumming in the diaspora requires musicians to know, along with drum rhythms, certain songs and dances.

Impromptu group of drummers at ODUNDE.

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With the enslavement of Africans to build the New World, drumming traditions underwent many transformations. Banned in Protestant America, hand drumming survived in other (often transparent) guises. The pestle and mortar (used to pound rice), hambone, handclapping, footpatting, and tap dancing all kept the rhythmic impetus alive. The drum mystique also survived in the percussive style of playing other musical instruments.

As Philadelphia percussionist Leonard Gibbs says, "The drums that were banned, they are here now." Philadelphia musicians pride themselves on being first in the vanguard overseeing the return of hand drumming to its proper stature. These drummers consider that, by the 1940s, they reintroduced battery drumming (playing in an ensemble of at least three different-sized instruments) into African American life and culture. The tradition, however, continues to lead a relatively underground existence.

Spearheaded by the influence of Katherine Dunham (a social anthropologist, dancer and pioneer in the study and performance of Caribbean dance forms), the interpretive dance movement attracted many to the art of hand drumming. Dance studios such as Sidney King's, Eleanor's School of Dance, Madame Cuyjet's Judimar School of Dance, all located near the heart of the African American community, lured many neophyte drummers into their spaces to provide music for dance classes. Instructor/choreographers like John Hines of Judimar, who studied the drum, dance and musical forms of Cuba, taught these musicians many of the essential rhythms such as the rumba, samba and mambo. Soon drummers like Robert "Baba" Crowder, Howard "Sonny" Morgan, George Cannon and Garvan Masseaux were fixtures at the various dance studios. Through this ethnic dance craze, African Americans began to discover their complete root heritage.

Other key drummers brought diaspora rhythms to Philadelphia. Some members of the city's Traditional African American Drummers' Society, founded in 1986 to document and preserve the tradition, credit Eddie Roach with a key role in the revitalization of hand drumming. Attracted to the rhythms he heard while stationed in Panama, Mr. Roach learned from local drummers there, then followed his interest. After his discharge, he pursued Latin rhythms to the point that he was "authenticated," working professionally as a performer with Latin bands. Mr. Roach went on to perform on the same bill with Sarah Vaughn and to play for Josephine Baker at the Academy of Music. Roach says this about the drum: "I entered through portals and shared a drink with personalities that I never would have come in sight of had it not been for the drum." Local drummers were inspired by the passing of drummer George Cannon to form the Society; his death (and the powerful traditional funeral at which drummers' gathered) made people aware of the importance and fragility of their connection to drumming traditions.

By the late 1950s, Cuban immigrants contributed toward a major musical exchange. The Afro-Cuban drummers introduced their American counterparts to the more commercial aspects of the musical tradition. The local collective of African American drummers religiously attended concert performances featuring Tito Puente and Dizzie Gillespie's Honduran-born, Cuban-trained drummer Chano Pozo. Soon, many of Philadelphia's African American drummers were appearing locally and internationally in association with Latin performers. For many Philadelphia drummers, this influence also began

Ken Fauntleroy, of Kulemele with shekere.

their entrée into syncretized African religion as many of their fellow musicians were affiliated with Santeria, Condomble, Lucumi, and Vodun. Unlike folk musical revivals, hand drumming constitutes a revitalization of cultural patterns. Here, cultural traditions are reintroduced, and their older, deeper meanings remain intact as adherents are initiated into a way of life.

Simultaneously, in the late 1950s, Saka Aquaye arrived from Ghana to study sculpture at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. His artistry was not restricted to visual arts, and he shared his knowledge of Ghanaian drumming traditions with the local hand drummers. "Baba" Crowder and William "Fats" Roberts were especially close to Aquaye, and gained an African centered perspective on their arts through their involvement with the Ghanaian. According to Crowder, who went on to found the dance troupe Kulemele, "When Aquaye found us, he said, 'this is what I want.' He told us that of all the drummers he had seen, we were the only ones who knew where we were headed. Because of John Hines and Maya Dern, we were already playing fluently. We were pretty advanced when Saka met us." Aquaye then broadened their musical base through the complexity of the rhythms he shared.

Babatunde Olatunji, a reknowned Nigerian drummer, also recognized the artistry of this class of drummers and spirited some of them away to New York City to perform with his drum ensemble. The musicians credit Olatunji with teaching them how drum beats complement a song. Moreover, the Philadelphia hand drummers received a powerful and positive sanction from the African musical world through this important link. Time and again, African American traditional drummers from Philadelphia were seeking out opportunities to school themselves in diaspora drum traditions, and were achieving such mastery in their instruments that African and Cuban drummers acknowledged their achievements and sought them out.

Arthur Hall offered another vital connection during the era of Black Power and Black Pride in the 1960s. His dance ensemble became a focus for still another generation of hand drummers. He offered percussion lessons explicitly in West African musical traditions taught by a talented

Batá battery with Greg "Peachy" Jarmin chanting in center, Baba Crowder to right.

Photos: Thomas B. Morton

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Batá battery, l-r: Ken Fauntleroy, "Truck," Henry Dixon, Baba Crowder, John Wilkie, Okikilu.

Showing appreciation for the drumming.

▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲

cadre of drummers: Neiye, James Corry, Bobby Artis, Farel Johnson, William Powell and Robert Franklin. Moreover, during this period, the association of the drum with the sacred components began to take hold. With the proper initiation of a burgeoning number of African Americans into traditional African religions, the primary identification of many of the drummers turned to the sacred realm of music. For them, their religious orientation transcended any other contexts: commercial, social, or other. After a musical exchange with Ghana, many dancers and musicians became initiates in the Akan religion.

Aña constitutes a sacred order among hand drummers following the Afro-Cuban adaptation of Yoruba traditions and embraces a cross-cultural spectrum of honored musicians. Several African American drummers have gained this stature. Their instruments (the double-headed, hourglass-shaped batá) are consecrated and it is these drums that beckon the Orishas (deities) during festivities. The Bembe, a common festivity to honor the Orishas, offers the main social context for such musical displays in contemporary Philadelphia.

Today, by virtue of their shared artistry and history, the Traditional African American Drummers Society provides an important focus for the musical culture of hand drumming in Philadelphia. Members distinguish five "waves," eras, or generations shaping the development of drum culture here: first, Eddie Roach ranks as the father of African American hand drummers. Next, having performed with the now-legendary Saka Aquaye, come "Baba" Crowder, Eddie "Fats" Roberts, "Sonny" Morgan and Garvan Masseaux. Closely linked to that group were others who made important contributions, making drums, exploring the traditions, teaching: George Cannon, Ron "Facundo" Harris, Charles "Minye" Gay, Walt Mitchell, Robert Franklin, and William Powell. "Baba" Crowder himself has gained recognition as a master drummer, and has taught the art form to others. Many in the next wave of hand drummers apprenticed under him, and many of his students have gone on to attain mastery—or the

Moved by the spirit at ODUNDE.

ability to properly communicate musically in a variety of musical systems. Among this next generation are Greg "Peachy" Jarmin, Leonard "Doc" Gibbs, Darrell Burgee and Skip Burton. And the loosely-knit community of drummers continues to grow and to learn. Touring artists from Africa and the Caribbean stay at drummers' homes, play music together after shows at parties, share techniques and knowledge. Philadelphia hand drummers continually seek out opportunities to visit drummers in Nigeria, the Caribbean and elsewhere.

The drum culture in the U.S. has fundamentally been a man's musical culture, and a male performative tradition. Many of the hand drummers express their relationship to their music in symbolic terms of endearment. Some say that the drum is a woman, to be respected like a woman. Part of the aesthetic appeal of hand drumming is the conscious awareness musicians have of engaging a vital force. Revered drummer "Peachy" Jarmin instructs his youthful drum class that playing has "got to be sweet. You've got to feel it." A sweet player has a sweet touch.

In a contemporary context, it is not only men who develop and elaborate knowledge and philosophy related to this musical tradition. Some women drummers garner public acclaim. As a sacred drummer, Nana Koranteama brings innovations within the traditions of the Akan faith. Omomola Iyabunmi has been a driving force in developing both a women's shekere ensemble and battery, and in exploring womens' roles within African percussive tradition. Overall, Philadelphia's hand drummers constitute a select group of musicians. They do not reenact a tradition but constitute a vital part of a musical and religious culture. Therefore, the musicians can lament the "lugalagas" or untrained and undisciplined "park bench" or "summer drummers," who remain ignorant of the untapped spirits that dwell within their reach.

Thus, it is especially significant that the spiritual and sacred dimensions of hand drumming have been from the very outset central to the celebration of the ODUNDE festival. When they take to the streets, yearly leading the batá battery over the South Street bridge to make an offering to Oshun, they are contributing not only rhythms hard-won, but their own deeper revisions of what music can mean. As youths, they followed the drums. As grown men, they play the drums of the African diaspora and participate in various ways in a Yoruba ritual that is the heart of a powerful community festival. With this annual act—perhaps the only public display in Philadelphia of African sacred culture (as Thomas Morton has observed)—they sanctify the space and honor Oshun.

–Jerrilyn McGregory

Special thanks to Leonard "Doc" Gibbs, Thomas B. Morton and members of the Traditional African American Drummers Society for their generous assistance.

Drummers meeting and greeting: Greg Jarmin, Ken Fauntleroy in foreground.

Photos by Thomas B. Morton

Cultural Incubation: Sydney King's dance school and its legacies

Senegalese-style dancer from New York dances sabar on stage at ODUNDE at 23rd and South Streets.

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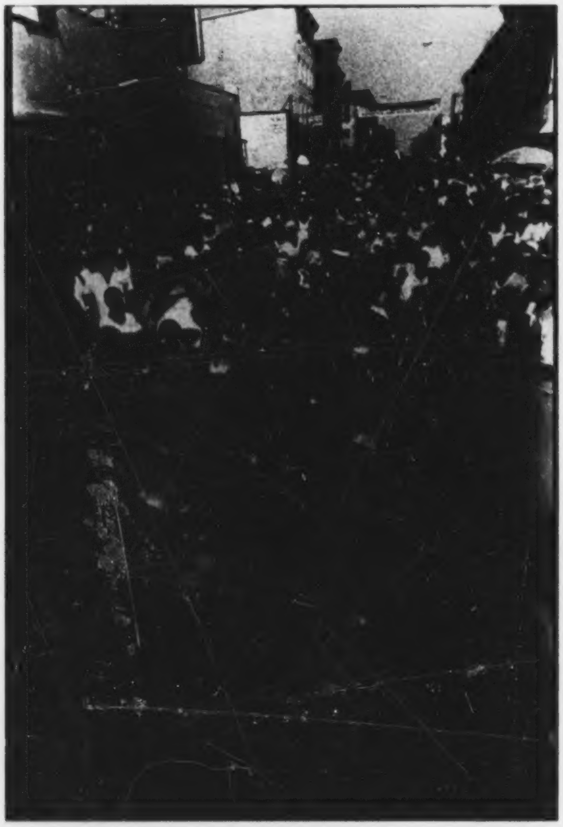
On the heels of the civil rights struggles in the U.S. in the 1960s came a renaissance of Black artistic expression greater than that even of the 1920s. New Black magazines emerged, Black playwrights wrote of revolution and used the theater as a tool to raise Black consciousness. Art, literature, dance, drama and music became vehicles to express Black nationalism. Artists embraced the totality of the Black experience. From Africa to contemporary America, the "uprooted" found and re-discovered their voices.

In Philadelphia, culture and the arts added to and helped shape political and social initiatives. Civil rights leaders talked of the need for Blacks to define themselves. Culture and the arts were understood to be part of that self-definition. The late John Allen and Bob Leslie accepted that challenge and in 1966, with only $2000, they founded Freedom Theater. Today, 27 years later, the theater located in North Philadelphia is one of the most respected off-Broadway theaters and dramatic schools in the country.



Representing a marriage of culture and political ideology in the early 1960's, the drummers and dancers of the newly-formed Arthur Hall Afro-American Dance Ensemble were an attraction for political and civil rights rallies held throughout the city. Another "child" of the '60s was Lois Fernandez. She was active in political struggles while she was also exploring the Yoruba culture of Nigeria. In 1972 her interests in traditional African culture took her to Oshogbo, Nigeria, where she witnessed the Oshun Festival. Returning home, she dreamed of replicating the festival in her South Philadelphia neighborhood near 23rd and South Streets. Today the ODUNDE African American Festival is in its 18th year. It is one of the largest such street festivals in the nation.

However in most discussions of culture and the arts there is an institution in Philadelphia which gets overlooked. Prior to the advent of Arthur Hall, Freedom Theater, ODUNDE, Bushfire Theater, the Afro-American Historical and Cultural Museum, Philadanco, the Africamericas Festival, Jaasu, and many more there was the Sydney School of Dance. The school, originally located on South Broad Street near Fitzwater Street, was a cultural and artistic incubator.

The school was started 47 years ago by Sydney G. King, who was born in Jamaica but came to Philadelphia when she was two years old. Her family settled in Southwest Philadelphia. "One day when I was seven years old, a lady came to the door and asked my mother if I could take dancing lessons at her house on South 46th Street, " King recalls. That lady was Essie-Marie Dorsey. She recruited dance students from the neighborhood and her dance studio was on the second floor of her home. It was 1927 and the Dorsey school was just getting started. "We only had five students," King remembers. "Mrs. Dorsey taught us ballet, Spanish castenets, and some tap."

King says Dorsey's instruction helped her to be picked to perform in "Schools on Parade" while she was a student at West Philadelphia High School. "I was the only Black girl in that school who had toe shoes," said King. "I didn't like being the only Black child. Right there and then I made up my mind I would make sure there would always be Black children well trained and involved in dance. In my yearbook I said that I wanted to have a dancing school."

So at age 26, the former Sydney Gibson, who was now married to Elwood King, fulfilled her dream: she opened her dancing school, after briefly being in partnership with Marion Cuyjet, another Dorsey alumna. King says she taught ballet, tap, and acrobatics. The school attracted students from across the city. She also began to hire teachers from New York who had studied with the famed Katherine Dunham group. In the 1930s and 40s, Dunham traveled to Haiti, Jamaica and Cuba. There she studied the dances and music which accompanied the religious rituals of the Africans in these Caribbean countries. The Dunham interpretive Afro-Cuban dance classes taught at King's school were extremely popular. They attracted more students as well as a battery of drummers already well-skilled in the art of African percussion. Four of the most proficient drummers, steeped in African and Afro-Cuban traditional drumming, played for these classes. They were Garvin Masseaux, Sonny Morgan, George Cannon and Bobby Crowder.

Renee Harris,
Kulemele dancer.

All are deceased, except for Crowder.

Sydney's African-based dance classes taught much more than dance. The non-European dance movements and the drum rhythms sparked interest in a land most of the students knew very little about. While King's students continued to struggle to fit their African bodies into European ballet positions, they also had the opportunity to contract and thrust their hips, to grandly place non-pointed feet on the dance floor and to learn African and Caribbean songs with strange new melodies and rhythms. The students at the King school never had to choose between Africa and Europe. Sydney King handed her young students Haitian choreography as quickly as she offered them Swan Lake.

Her students danced at the Academy of Music in annual recitals with full classical orchestral accompaniment, and they also danced at the Times Auditorium with jazz bands. Sydney King students were given the opportunity to fully explore the breadth of the African American experience via dance. As a result, King students have been represented in all phases of the dance world, including Julliard, the Rockettes of Radio City Music Hall, Philadanco, the Arthur Hall Afro-American Dance Ensemble and on Broadway.

The dances and rhythms of Africa and the Caribbean unearthed by anthropologist Dunham which thrived at the King school, in turn became a catalyst for study and research by maturing King students. African culture had incubated in their hearts, minds and bodies. The cultural re-connection increases social and political consciousness. It liberates and inspires. It refreshes and renews.

This writer is in many ways a personification of the Sydney King legacy. Throughout a career in broadcast, government and social action, the sense of pride, of being taught early on to hold your head up, to put your shoulders back and to look confident before going on stage on a recital—all this has helped me to at least keep the outer look of confidence in some very trying professional times. The voice of encouragement and inspiration that was always emanating from Miss Sydney King continues to ring strong and true in my ears.

She exposed us to so many people: to anthropologists, professional Black women in suits, dancers who were showgirls, gay people, Cubans—you just saw a United Nations of people. It was just the world that Miss Sydney gave us. And then when we went out to do shows, we would do all kinds of venues and we would meet the elite. We knew we could go anywhere. Miss Sydney was very conservative in the midst of all this, and she had all the same values of our parents. She was not African centered. But she created an environment where the African root system could be further developed.

Some time in the 1970s, when I was teaching a class of budding dancers at the Ile Ife Center, we were called upon to take part in a dance extravaganza at the Academy of Music which included dancers from all over the city—all white except our group. Our children patiently sat and waited for their turn to rehearse as the other dancing groups got their chance. When it came to our turn, the conductor said to us that it wasn't important for our group to rehearse. And I could hear the voice of Sydney King saying, "My children *will* rehearse." Well, the conductor was adamant and I was adamant. And there was a group of janitors and cleaning ladies—all black—who worked at the Academy and they had noticed our group there and had gathered to watch, and as this confrontation began, they began moving closer to the stage. And at the same time the conductor and I looked out from the stage and saw a group of twenty people standing there, and suddenly he decided that he wasn't going to have a confrontation with this African American woman with plaited hair and a leotard. And my children rehearsed with the Philadelphia Orchestra.

And the confidence to stand there in the middle of the Philadelphia Orchestra stage came from the fact that it wasn't the first time that I had been on that stage. I had performed on that stage a dozen times. I had performed with orchestras. I had seen Miss Sydney and other dance teachers settle disputes with musicians in the pit. And I knew what had to be done. You need to have models to know what to do. And Miss Sydney was a model to many of us.

—Karen Warrington

Egungun dancing with batá battery on the way to the river.

Photos: Thomas B. Morton

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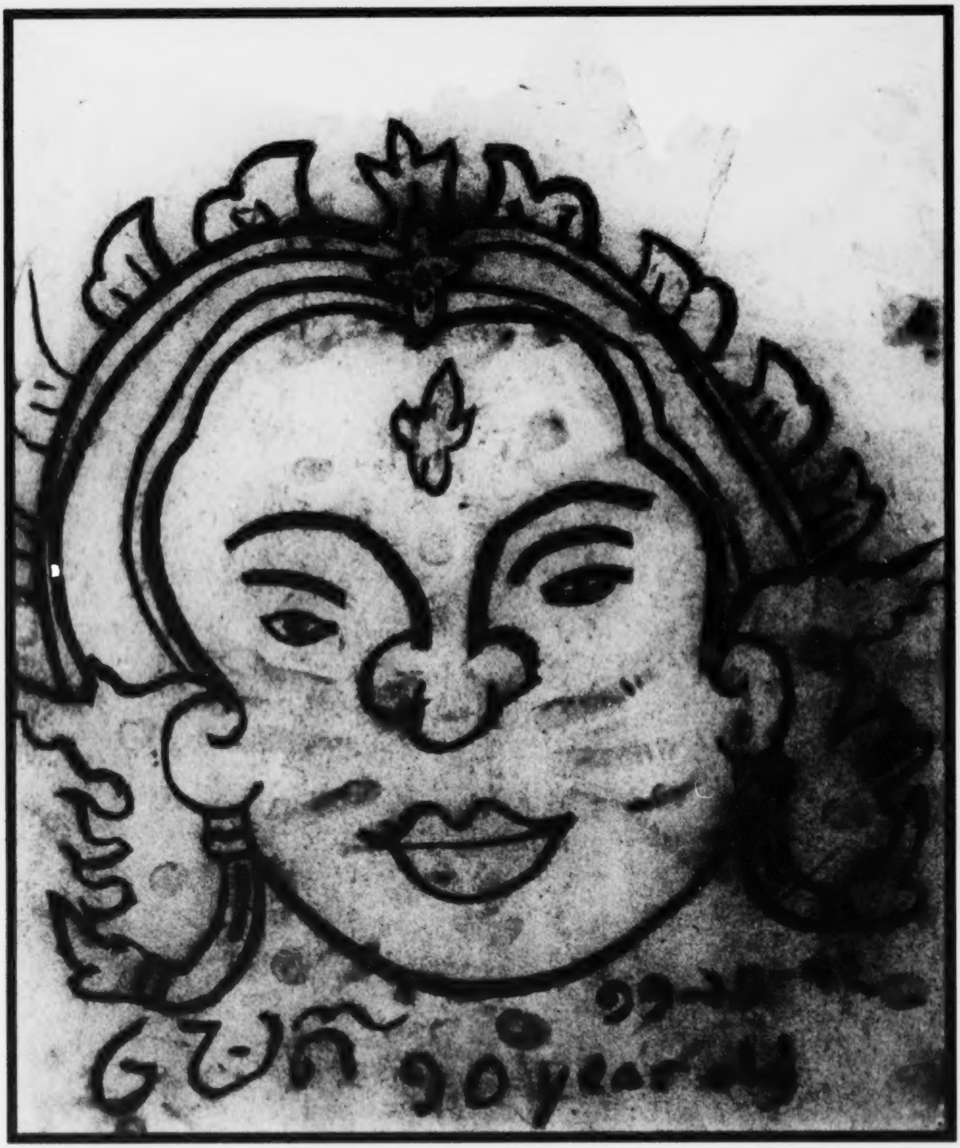

Right: Sketch of princess with crown (kbang) by Meth Moeun, 1992

Below: Isabelle Fambro, John Hart, Libby Spenser and Edith Hunt. Photo: Debora Kodish, 1993

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Some Beginnings and Breaks: First Notes from the Philadelphia Tap Initiative

> To me, Bill Robinson was the best dancer until I saw Teddy Hale and then when I saw Teddy Hale I began to think of that thing all over again. . . To me, Teddy Hale changed the style of dancing. You understand what I'm saying? Dancers that came along in certain eras was great, but then here comes along somebody else that changed the style of that thing for you, you know? And that's what Teddy did for me when I first saw Teddy Hale was at the Earle Theatre, right here in Philadelphia and I haven't seen anything like that in my life. And then I began to break him down because I saw Baby Lawrence, from Baltimore. And then I said, "Wait a minute, something's happening here that ain't supposed to happen." Because Baby Lawrence took that thing another step further. But when I looked at 'em both and I said, "Damn, they're both doing it, but they just telling different stories." You dig what I'm saying? I mean, they both had that certain thing that was a notch above alot of dancers, including myself. You understand what I'm saying? But what I really began to understand about these guys—they were putting tap dancing to the instrument, or putting the instrument to the tap. You see what I'm saying. Which took a little time, because when I noticed, both of these guys were singers. You dig what I'm saying?. . . They did what a singer would do, but they did it dancing. . . .
> —LaVaughn Robinson

From the 1920s to the present, people recall that Philadelphia has been home to a significant number of exceptional African American tap dancers—hoofers—who played important roles in shaping this folk art. "Dance was happening everywhere . . . . On every street corner on Philadelphia's South Street," LaVaughn Robinson has often said, "you could hear a different time step." Peoples' memories of "coming up" routinely describe "picking up steps on the streets," and from family and neighbors.

The vital Philadelphia dance scene was connected in many ways to the national scene: young would-be dancers found their ways backstage and inside bars and clubs to soak up the steps of older tap legends in town to perform. After hours clubs were other places to mix and mingle, see and be seen. The Standard and Lincoln Theaters, the Earle, Budweiser's, Sim's Paradise, Palumbo's, Emerson's. Philadelphia dancers went to New York, on the road, to the mountains. Dancers from elsewhere came here, and (to hear it told) often stayed.

"Tap is the only original American dance form," says Libby Spencer. "Tap is the— relatively, I would say—the beginning. . . All of dance centers around tap because it's all . . . timing," says Mildred Thorpe. Tap, as it has been shaped by African American artists over the last fifty years, reflects an ethic and aesthetic that is markedly different from that of today's mainstream dance world. Germaine Ingram writes that "vernacular rhythm tap has a focus on subtle polyrhythms and aural presentation, a competitive milieu underscored by a cooperative ethic in which artists borrowed, adapted and made other peoples' steps their own (but in which—in theory—they did not perform another person's routine publicly)."

Like many other African American folk arts, tap has many different faces, lives, or histories when viewed from inside African American communities and from "outside." And there are several "insides" to the story of tap—extraordinary women rhythm tappers faced the double discrimination of racism and sexism as they tried to develop as artists. They were less able to get "breaks" during the heyday of rhythm tap and restricted to certain kinds of dance because of their color and looks. The tap revival of the 1970s opened new venues to some African American men; no African American women hoofers were invited to the schools, festivals, or dance revivals then developing.

Dancers' stories about how they started, about big breaks and missed opportunities are subjects that begin to raise complicated questions about the mix between talent, opportunity, and the times, and about the complicated relations between vernacular and "mainstream," black and white traditions. As a way of beginning to fill in the complex history of African

Edith "Baby Edwards" Hunt and John Hart. Photo: Thomas B Morton, 1993

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American tap, we provide a brief sampling from some recent discussions among Philadelphia dancers about how people started out in the business, and about the significance of "breaks" to someones' career.

When I first met Willie Bryant was at Budweisers. . . 16th and South. 'Cause Willie Bryant was the master of ceremonies when they used to have jam session on Thursday night when when all the performers used to come to Budweisers. And Willie Bryant was the Master of Ceremonies. Now, here's another thing. . . They had a show in New York. When Willie Bryant left Budweisers, he went to New York and they had a television show called "Toast of the Town." Do you remember that? See. And when "Toast of the Town" got so big, they took it away from Willie Bryant and gave it to Ed Sullivan.—LaVaughn Robinson

Well, naturally, he was the wrong color. And he don't have the money, see.—John Hart

I was the type I never thought about it. . . . I wasn't a pushy type. I would go and do what I had to do. And it's like when I went up to the Horn and Hardart, I left the Parisien. . . I was one of the first. One of the fellows saw my mother somewhere and he asked and gave my mother this number, for my mother to go up 1622 Chestnut Street. And I went up there—I was a regular. And then they started coming up here and there. But I was on there regular. My picture was . . . at the Horn and Hardart restaurants. —Edith "Baby Edwards" Hunt

Well, you broke the color barrier, that's what you did.—LaVaughn Robinson

And I'll say this while I'm talking. Baby Edwards [Edith Hunt]—[of those] all little girl dancers, from five to twelve—she's the best I've seen, and I'm talking about movies and everything else. But she didn't get the breaks. See if you don't know anybody and get breaks, you ain't going nowhere. She worked different places but I'm talking about getting the breaks. . . Shirley Temple's good. But Shirley Temple wasn't . . . as good as Edith. I'm not saying that for color—I'm talking about what I see. I go by what I see. Now Shirley Temple's good now, but she was better."—John Hart

Well, they had a call for chorus girls. And I needed a job. I said, "Well, I think I'll go down there and try out for the line." And I was picked. And from then on, I just worked every week. I did stock in the Apollo Theater. . . . So we just went from week to week in the Apollo. And of course, we had to change routines every week. Three routines we had to change every week. And we were in competition with the Radio City Music Hall. And of course, they changed every four weeks. They had 42 girls. We had 16 girls. And we had to change every week. And they changed 24 girls every four weeks, see. They had several weeks rest. We didn't have any rest at all. We just had to go from week to week.—Libby Spencer

I always had a yearning to be a tap dancer. In fact, in my adolescent years, or my youth, I used to hang around the Lincoln Theater in Philadelphia. . . at Broad and Lombard. And I was fascinated by this tap dancer Honi Coles. He was always so smooth—glides through and taps galore. And I used to hang out at the stage door.

So one day, he came out and I said, "Mr. Coles"—I think I was about 14 or 15 then. I said, "Mr. Coles, would you show me that step that you did in the show?" He said, "Which one?" And I tried to interpret the step that I was referring to. And he said, "Hey, hold it. I like your version better than mine." Maybe he was kiddin' me, but that's what he said.

In fact, I grew up—I left home when I was about 16. I had my tap shoes in my hand and I went down to the waterfront. This was where your produce trucks leave and go with their produce to New York. And I conned one of these drivers and I say, "Hey. I'm broke and I gotta get home. Do you go to New York?" He says, "Yes. Where do you live in New York?" Now we're on the highway now. I says some wierd street. He says, "No, you don't live in New York." He says, "We don't have any streets with that name." I says, "Oh, well, you see my shoes here?" I say, "I want to be a tap dancer. And I've read so many times that you have to go to New York to be recognized. And this is what I am doing." He says, "OK." When he got to New York, down by the waterfront, he let me off. He said, "Listen, dear." He said, "You take this two dollars. Git you a subway. Get off at 125st Street and St. Nicholas Avenue." He said, "You walk down a block and you'll find the Apollo The-

L-R: Germaine Ingram, Libby Spenser, and Edith Hunt. Photo: Debora Kodish, 1993

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Dave McHarris, Isabelle Fambro and Germaine Ingram examine a LaRay tap.

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atre." He said, "They have amateur nights there." This I did.

In the interim I get down to 126th Street. Another stage entrance and I hung around there for about a hour, then I walked up to Seventh Avenue. And this place was called The Alhambra Grill. . . And this where all the actors used to go between shows and eat, you know, and drink if they preferred to drink. So I was in there. They had black-eyed peas and rice. Cornbread. This is facts. Fifteen cents. Man, I was living.

So I got me my black-eyed peas and rice and just to a little right of the counter where I was eating, they had a stage. And all these chorus girls was up there, you know. . . this producer was takin' them through their paces. His name was Clarence Robinson. And I would sit there and I'd watch and then, when they'd get through, like you know, tell 'em to take a five minute break, et cetera, I walked over to him. I said, "Sir. . . I'm from Philadelphia and I want to be a tap dancer. Would you let me do a number for you?" He said, "Sure." I got up there, did my little thing, you know.

Now the amateur night is about three days away. And I ain't got no roof, no pot, no nothing. Serious. So I, oh, I don't know, I've just always been one to survive. So I would go down to the bus terminal at 42nd Street and I'd stay in there at night 'till the day came and then I'd come back up. I'd surface, as we'd say. And I did that for about four days and four nights.

Now I only got fifty cent in my pocket, now. I go to the amateur night. I didn't get the first prize, I got the second prize. O.K. So that was a little extra money in my pocket, right? I turn around, I said, "Boy, New York—people, they don't have time for you, they don't say hello. You know, being from Philadelphia, you have a certain comradeship, you know what I mean? And I was beginning to get a little frightened because like I said, I would say. . . I didn't know how to get to Broadway. Nobody would tell you anything. So I lasted with this money, from the amateur contest, I lasted about two more days, so. I was tired, I mean, I was beginning to talk back to myself because I hadn't took a shower or anything—I mean, you know, I'm serious.

And I just got disgusted and I . . . called home, reversed the charges, and told my mother, I said, "Mother I'm here in New York," I said, "And I am sick, I am tired, I want to come home." She said, "OK Baby, I'll send Billy for you . . . ." And he came and picked me up and I came home and I made myself a promise. I says, "I been to New York. It's not easy to become a star. I say, the next time I come to New York, I'll have a contract." And those words became true when I teamed up with Pepper.—Mildred "Candi" Thorpe.

[Jolly Joyce] said, "Come in the office, Dave, I want to talk to you." But Dee sat out in the other part—outer office. He said, "Look," he said. "I got a good job for you, three months in South America." I said, "Yeah?" And he says—I don't know what the money was, but it wasn't that much, but it was that much in them days. I said, "OK. . ." I said, "Well, my two tickets—" He said, "I can't buy a ticket for your wife," he says, "she's dead weight." I said, "She ain't dead to me." I'm just saying. He said, "But they won't pay for her unless she's workin with you." I said "OK." So I come out and . . . I said, "I'm going to South America." And Dee said, "When do we leave?" I said, "No, we don't leave. It's just me." She said, "No, no, when I said 'for better or worse', I mean for better or worse—and that's what its been. . ." So I said, "OK." I got so mad at Dee that I went out and bought her a pair of tap shoes, and opened that door, right there in the Douglas Hotel and threw 'em to her and she's been jumping with them shoes ever since.—Dave McHarris

I said, "What is this?" He said, "You want to travel, you got to work." So, I said, "I don't care." My famous words—I don't care.—Dee McHarris

But you know what? She could do a time step and a over-the-top, her Uncle Billy had taught her that.—Dave McHarris

[Harry Edwards and I met and decided to dance together.] And we started rehearsing right on the street there—Lombard Street. Twenty-hundred block, we were living in. . . And we started rehearsing there. So. What happened, we had a job coming up at this dance hall. A white club, giving this dance, now. . . and a show. So we went up there. But he said to me, "Hey John." He said, "We aren't—we're not rehearsing with any music." I said "You're right." He said, "How I know all this will be in time with music? Two choruses of this and. . . ." I said, "It's in time with music." He said, "I 'm gonna hold you responsible if it's not in time with the music." I said "OK."

Well, Edith ["Baby Edwards," Harry's sister] was on the program too, but she was working by herself at this time, you see. . . . . and we come on. And this fellow, I don't know his name now, kind of cross-eyed. White fellow. Good rhythm dancer. He was a good rhythm— that boy could dance. Kind of cross-eyed . . . And we went out next to the last. 'Cause the boy that I say was kind of cross-eyed, he went out last.

We danced with "Liza," and we flash danced, you know, fast. . . He was a rhythm dancer. But audience do not know anything about a whole lot of rhythm or like that. When someone's flashy, the audience, it catches the audiences' eye. See, that's what catches the eye. Not because you [go], "that's good, very good, that's a very good dancer"—if [it's] all dancers there. But now you got people who don't know anything about dancing and they want some flash and fast. And that's what we was doing. And while he was out there dancing, that man who hired us, he put his ear down. Because, see in a dance hall, you have to roll out the mat. You have a dancing mat. He rolled out the mat. He put his ear down to hear if he could hear where all this tap's coming from. . . and this man put his ear down and he listened and listened and listened and we was putting a whole lot of snatch in—brrr, brr, nbrr, brrrra, brrrm [imitates rhythms] and when we went off—well, the audience went wild about it.

And uh, Harry says to me in the dressing room, "Hey, John, they're still applauding." I said, "I know they are." And this, when this white fellow went on—I forgot his name now—good rhythm dancer, I'll give him credit, he was a good rhythm dancer. But the people don't know anything about rhythm, and when he came off—see, he didn't get the applause we had, so he got angry. And he came off. . . and when he was in the dressing room, he said, "They weren't doing anything but a whole lot of snatches and pull-ups and wings, that's all they was doing." He was fussing, to hisself, see. But he didn't realize—an audience like this, that audience don't know anything about that. You got to sell what you got to the audience. . . The fellow got angry with us, but he should have got angry with the crowd. It was the audience there. But that happens, you know.—John Hart

To preserve and explore the distinctive features and histories of vernacular tap, to showcase some of the artists who have had a significant impact on the form, and to bring these knowledgeable voices into more public conversations, the PFP has worked with a range of people to initiate "The Philadelphia Tap Initiative." Under Germaine Ingram's direction, we've been conducting interviews, holding rehearsals, and are developing some performances with such veteran virtuoso hoofers as Isabelle Fambro, John Hart, Edith "Baby Edwards" Hunt, Hortense Allen Jordan, Henry Meadows, Dave and Dee McHarris, LaVaughn Robinson, Libby Spencer, and Mildred "Candi" Thorpe. You can expect to read more about these artists, and the Tap Initiative in upcoming newsletters.

Isabelle Fambro, dancing; Dave McHarris and Germaine Ingram, seated. Photos: Thomas B. Morton, 1993

Thanks to Carole Boughter and Cheryl Willis for their roles in conceptualizing and developing the project, to Cheryl Willis for help with interviews, to Barry Dornfeld and Thomas B. Morton for help with documentation, and to Bushfire Theater and the Painted Bride Art Center for generously contributing rehearsal space. We are grateful to the Lila Wallace-Readers' Digest Community Folklife Program, the National Endowment for the Arts Folk Arts Program, The Pew Charitable Trusts, the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, the Pennsylvania Humanities Council and Germaine Ingram for support.

—Debora Kodish

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Ethnographic Perspectives on a Cambodian Arts Class in Philadelphia

On Tuesday afternoons, a basement studio at the Samuel S. Fleisher Art Memorial was filled during most of the past year with young people drawing princes, princesses, giants, a magical white horse, monkeys and angels—primary or stock character types of the Cambodian *lakhon bassak*, or folk opera. In later months there were also drawings of scenery *(khach pñi)* and statue ornamentation *(chumla)*. For the weekly arts classes at the Fleisher, the teachers, Leendavy Koung and her father Koung Peang drew certain characters from the operatic repertoire on the blackboard and the students both copied and experimented. Students worked with pencil, chalk, and paint, before moving on to mask making, and in a few sessions, face painting. From Sipom Ming, they received some instruction in costume design and beadwork, including differences in men's and women's costume and elementary geometric and representational beadwork design (much of which was completed by students at home). Stage movement and stick-fighting components were part of the class for the older students. Voice and music instruction took place largely off-site. These were some of the activities of the first formal classes in these Khmer folk arts to be offered by a Philadelphia art school. Following are some observations about the implications of the first year's experiment; these are excerpts from a longer report on the project.

What eventually happened was perhaps inevitable. In searching for an outlet for the practice of these arts, Koung Peang asked me if the American New Year's parade were open to participation by a Cambodian arts group. At this point a combination of events changed the focus of the class for good. Attention shifted away from a process-oriented art class with no definitive end-product or outcome, which seemed to have been an unspoken issue at the outset, towards preparation for concrete performances, both in Philadelphia's annual Mummers' Parade on January 1st, and a PFP-sponsored community concert in November .

The core students involved in the art class, plus this ethnographer, formed the so-called "Cambodian-American Arts Group" for the purpose of marching in the parade. Through the Folklore Project, Leendavy Koung had already been in touch for some months with the Golden Sunrise Fancy Club whose headquarters were just two doors down from the Cambodian Buddhist Temple by a remarkable coincidence, but whose members had never mixed or met the Cambodian artists previously.

The Mummers' Parade was the event around which the company first jelled. That was the defining moment of the class; ultimately, rehearsals took place not one but seven days a week in preparation for the march. The class had burst the bounds of the Fleisher. After the Parade, the "Cambodian-American Arts Group" now began to practice a full-length opera for the first time. And the disparate parts of the arts curriculum that were being taught in the more formal Tuesday class were now being brought together. Students, if only a select few, were not only continuing their art class every weekday evening at Koung Peang's home, but they were bringing their art to their own homes, and making, for example, their own costumes to wear later on the stage. The group, and the classes, had transformed into something else, taken on lives of their own.

The theatrical process itself was interesting to watch. In general Mr. Koung sat off to the side, playing the *tror* while students played percussion. He taught the lines by reciting them aloud with the students' repeating them afterward. Mr. Koung referred to no written script, but prompted strictly from memory, when the actors looked at him or indicated (by not speaking, for example) that they didn't know their lines. Commonly an actor who did know a part would speak the line or sing the part so the actor playing that role could hear. And in this way it became a very corporate event, with multiple actors singing the same lines, even the actors offstage (and sometimes even crossing gender, if only jokingly). During rehearsals it was not at all uncommon to hear three or more actors singing the same song.

In part this came from necessity. The demands of school, work and family obligations often meant that any number of students could miss class or rehearsal. So students were constantly filling in for one another and learning several parts. This created a natural corps of understudies. It also gave students an opportunity to learn the play from a number of different character perspectives, so they got a better sense of how the story and characters fit together.

There seemed to be nothing like auditions as we know it; auditioning came from trying out the part until someone better would come along. It all seemed less individualistic than student theater in the U.S. In fact, the whole art class was geared less toward the progress of the individual student, and more toward the development of both a core group of performers and a group of students who appreciated Cambodian culture.

Here a number of issues related to different approaches to education might be mentioned. It should be apparent from the comments above that Mr. Koung's methods of direction were systematic—within his own cultural system. Similarly, Khmer and U.S. notions of evaluations of teachers and students are framed differently. Accessibility itself is seen as a virtue in our educational culture (presuming some degree of

Peang Koung with granddaughter Sidany Kuong Photo: Jane Levine, 1993

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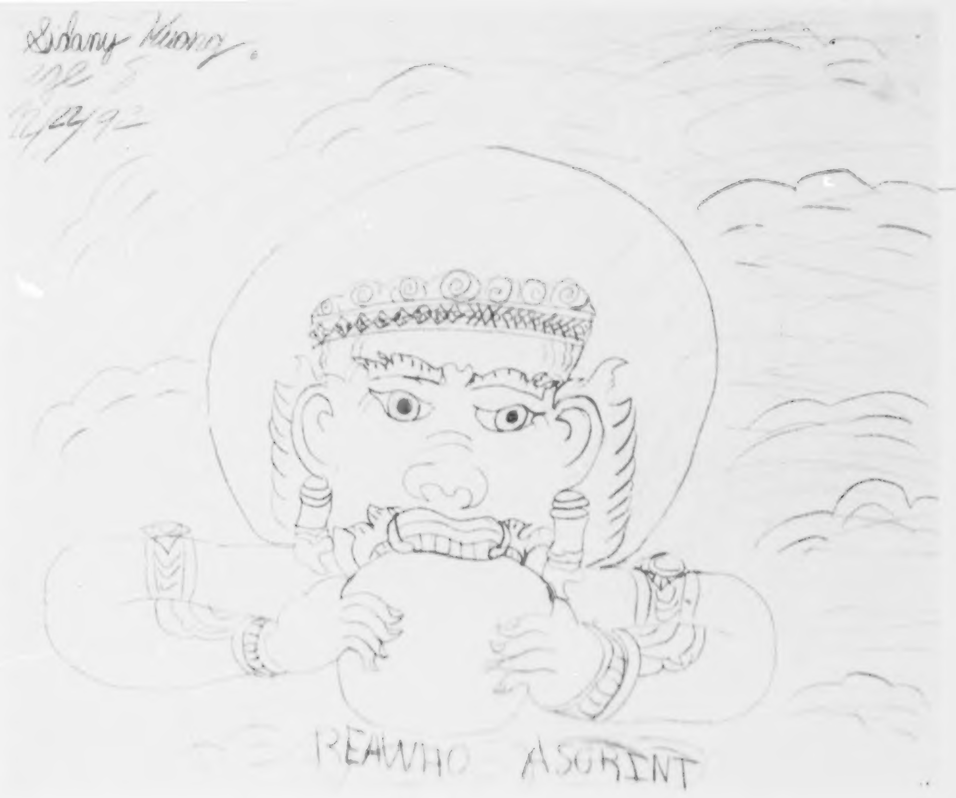
egalitarian status of teacher and student), but the idea of accessibility is culturally determined. In Cambodia, to criticize a teacher was unheard of. What we see as accessibility, after all, may represent a breakdown of a more traditional, respectful role of the teacher elsewhere.

The American emphases on individual growth and on self-esteem as a measure of educational development are also culturally specific ideals. Our educational system is goal-oriented, positing a linear time progression for one's life, and the belief in the centrality of the individual. Cambodian cultural values place more emphasis, it would seem from this class, on cyclical time progressions, recognizing the value of the past in the present and of the changing and return of generations and reincarnation of individuals, and a belief in the centrality of the community. Community esteem, then, is of more value than self-esteem, and the growth of the students depended on their being more Cambodian, not more individualistic.

The recruitment process, in turn, raised questions about educational access, and the ways that may be culturally determined. Specifically, there were few students in the class who did not already know Mr. Koung at the beginning and who came in unconnected to the local network of musical families or who had no arts experience beforehand. Given how many students were recruited in such a short time and from such a small geographical area and network of relations, it would be astonishing to think how many Cambodian American youth elsewhere in Philadelphia (let alone students of other cultural backgrounds) are not being served by arts or art education programs. Contact, relationships, word of mouth—rather than so-called "neutral" or impersonal mechanisms—were essential to enabling students to come to the class, reflecting other cultural values.

There were only two female students above the age of twelve in the class, and we are aware that other youth workshops and programs designed for Cambodian students have run into the same problem. A result of the differential treatment afforded to males and females in Cambodian society is that young women are often kept very sheltered by their parents and are not encouraged to participate in outside educational or cultural activities the way that boys are. Under trusted adult supervision, or under certain safe circumstances, or with particularly independent young women, this could be known to change.

This is further compounded by the fact that the questionable or marginal social status of young people associated with the theatrical arts in Cambodia further stigmatizes the participants even here, on some level. Actually, this is true not only of theatrical arts, but many other art forms to a greater or lesser extent. Some of this came out of the social position of theatrical performers in Cambodia, who were regarded as marginal, both economically (lower-class, in a very socially stratified and class-conscious society), and sexually (promiscuous, in a society where



Reahu Absorin (a giant who swallows the moon) by Sidany Koung, age 8, 1992

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sexual interaction, at least publicly, is very carefully circumscribed by rules of propriety regarding engagement, marriage, and male-female interaction in general). So, one impediment to certain kinds of presence and participation was the stigma associated with the performing arts.

Our own initial choice of teachers reflected assumptions and hierarchies about who counted as an artist and which seemed to be "major" art forms. Koung Peang's wife, Sipom Ming, was not formally designated one of the teachers when our arts education project began. As folk opera became more a focus of classes, costume design became more prominent a part of students' work, and her significance as a working and teaching artist in the community was inescapable. Again, to look at whether or not she is considered "creative" or an artist, within her community or in larger Philadelphia absolutely requires an understanding of the social and economic background of her work and her life.

In two recent books, *Creating Minds* (1993) and *To Open Minds* (1989), psychologist Howard Gardner examines the nature of creativity and the development of creative individuals. While this is not the place for a full review and discussion of these books, Gardner makes several statements about the nature of teaching and learning art that—if we address them from the perspective of the folk arts—ought to lend some insight both into this class and into some of the problems facing folk and traditional artists at least in this society. He doesn't claim to be an ethnographer, but his work cries out for a socio-cultural critique, of which this is part.

Gardner's conception of creativity requires novelty as one of the most salient components of the work. If one's work does not break with the tradition, it is by definition not creative.

And yet, to be recognized as creative (for no work is creative in and of itself) it must be recognized by "a relevant portion of one's community or one's culture" (CM, p. 36). He does not discuss the limitations and narrowness of that culture from which *he* comes, nor the relationship between cultural values and what counts as creativity. On the one hand he notes that creativity is "initially novel but ultimately acceptable in a culture" (TOM, p. 14), but then universalizes his own, privileging for *everyone* the "novel" over the "traditional." Novelty or originality is not a cultural universal. It just happens to be the value of a dominant social and economic culture in his time. The individualistic emphasis of Western society provides the grounding for a belief in the value of an avant-garde that stresses novelty at the expense of not only tradition but community.

The assumptions Gardner holds about art are very much the ones that a formally educated European-American in the U.S. grows up with too. He seems to say that to be truly creative requires a radical break with tradition. Where does that leave folk artists? That assumption is one of the roots of the double-bind that folk artists get caught up in: if you're traditional, you're not really creative and therefore can't compete for the serious money and attention of arts funding agencies, yet if you are novel or innovative, you're not really "folk" or "traditional" and thus are ineligible for recognition—academic or financial—as a traditional artist.

Who becomes an artist in this country? And who has access to arts education? In part, it is those who can manage "free" time and available transportation and find a teacher suited to them. For youth, it depends also upon parental attitudes regarding what is respectable. Most young women still do not have the opportunities that young men do. Access—to being an artist and to arts education—is neither neutral nor equally open to all.

And if creativity is to be equated with freedom, I must also point out that my observations in these particular Khmer arts classes were that students had considerable freedom in certain aspects of the exercises—such as color—even when copying the masters' drawings. Their costumes, which drew on traditional patterns and designs, were not limited to those forms, and featured grand experiments in color, materials, and iconography. Finally, the performance tradition, while memorized (not unlike Western theater anyway, which could also be termed "rote" or "ritualistic") also featured significant improvisation in both movement and in dialogue. Recognizing that required not only a familiarity with the form, but a careful knowledge of the work itself, and of course a knowledge of Khmer. (It was months after seeing Koung Peang as the giant in the opera *Tipsongva* that I learned he improvised numerous comic asides which Khmer-speaking audience members and cast appreciated fully.) Finally, the execution of the masks, the costumes, and so on often required ingenious solutions to the technical problems posed by being half a world away from the traditional materials as well as the sources of traditional designs on which their work was based. But recognizing these matters requires both knowledge of the people and art forms involved, and a willingness to examine one's own assumptions about the "right" way to teach art.

That said, let me dwell for a moment on the implications of the past year's Khmer arts residency program. We came to this project aware of an acute lack of support for Asian American cultural activities and for programs directed at the education of youth specifically. It is easy to yield to the temptation to present over and over the Cambodian horse-and-monkey show, to focus on the "exotic" in Khmer arts and present them superficially as a way of diversifying the classroom. Resisting this model, we began to explore an alternative to such decontextualized presentations. Aware of the uncalculated costs of such displays upon youth, we instead attempted to turn the Fleisher into a resource reaching out specifically for long-term commitment to a nearby underserved population. We tried to look at ways in which U.S. society, let alone Western American culture, needs to be more responsive to all students. This also led us away from framing our discussions only around questions of "obstacles" to be overcome—since that places the burden for adaptation too easily on the Cambodian artists and students involved in the project, rather than beginning with the assumption that all of our educational assumptions and practices could be scrutinized. We started with the assumption that not all students share in the educational culture of this place and time, and not all students want to.

The initial year of these experimental folk arts residencies provided many opportunities for youth, and resulted in much great art. But more than teaching us about Cambodian culture, it taught us to examine what it was in our own assumptions about educational processes that were neither natural nor given, but were highly determined by our own cultural backgrounds and prejudices.

—Bill Westerman

The above essay is composed of excerpts from a longer report on the first year of a three-year experimental arts education project undertaken by the Samuel S. Fleisher Art Memorial and the Philadelphia Folklore Project, with funding from the Pew Arts Development Initiative. An exhibition profiling four Khmer artists/teachers and raising questions about the cultural features of the educational process also grew out of this project. The project continues, with Chamroeun Yin and Eve Loughran as teachers, this year. For more information, see our working paper and exhibition notes. Thanks to Leendary Koung, Koung Peang, Sipom Ming, Chamnary Koung, Tha Thach, Houng Peach, Timothy Ngeth, Darith Moeun, Khom Koung, Naphal Chhlang, Rina Chan, Ry Khem, Sockhum Son, Ny Proeun, Peter Lay, Mean Peach, Debora Kodish, Thora Jacobson, Fran Gallun, and Meth Moeun.

Tha Thach and others from the Cambodian American Arts Group in the Mummers Parade, 1993. Photo: Debora Kodish

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Behind the Letter of the Law: Culture and the Work of the Public Defender

"My commitment was to be an attorney for the poor. I was tremendously opposed to imprisonment as a tool and I had a very strong belief that poverty and racism and class differences were the root of much of the criminality in this country. I also had developed a strong belief that in the courtroom you are fighting for Bill of Rights provisions every day." Jules Epstein, a criminal defense attorney and an advisor to PFP's law and culture project, reflected on how and why he became a Philadelphia public defender. "I got very involved in the notion that we were the last line of defense. These were poor people that had nobody else.... I mean I am helping people whose lives have been ruined in many ways, or who never had a chance, and all I'm doing is the band-aid of trying to keep 'em out of jail. Or keep their jail time as low as possible.... If you're poor you got nobody else....

I'm also the last line of defense in the sense that the criminal justice system is one of the few but most significant places where poor people interface with the government and the powers that be. And it's the most negative interface. And I am the last line of defense. Whatever else, freedom is real simple: you're in jail, you're out of jail."

They call it the last line of defense. Recognizing the distance between their clients, in class and culture, and those who hold and protect the power in this society, they know that they represent the last hope for justice and fairness their clients will see. They are public defenders, assigned with providing legal representation for the poorest defendants charged with criminal offenses, and in many cases they have made that choice a life commitment.

Public defenders know their clients are the poorest members of society, often the least well educated, coming from social backgrounds the farthest from the center of the legal system, where lawyers and judges with ample postgraduate backgrounds come from among the wealthiest segments of U.S. society. To be successful, defense attorneys must straddle both reaches of society, reconciling and translating notions of justice held by both sides, those who hold the power and those who don't. The system has one way of defining justice, rights, and criminality; defendants have their own, often the same, highly developed ways merely articulated differently, practiced on the streets, and seen through the different lens of being outside the power structure and not benefiting from it.

Where both the accused and the defenders stand together is that both see themselves outside the official system of belief about law and order. Both are confronted by the state: one whom the state has trained, the other whom the state has accused. Both read the conflicting messages of the state, but with different perspectives.

The most effective public defenders are aware of one thing which they don't all articulate, but which becomes an implicit part of their work: *having a knowledge of the law is not enough.* Those attorneys most successful at representing their clients—and this goes not only for criminal defense attorneys, but for housing, labor, social security, immigration and political asylum lawyers, and so on—are those who not only know the letter of the law, but are those who are most able to bridge the gap between the culture of the legal system and the culture(s) of their client, and back again. This requires a sensitivity to multiple cultures at once, and an implicit awareness of how class, language, nationality, gender, or religion can motivate people not only to act but to talk about or represent their actions in front of others. For an immigration attorney this may mean figuring out how to present the life history of a Haitian woman such that the court will understand she faces harm and persecution if she is returned to her country. For a housing lawyer, it may mean putting the failure to pay rent in a larger context so that it seems reasonable to those presumably neutral but coming from the perspective of being adequately housed.

For a defense attorney, it means developing a theory for the case that allows the defendant's evidence to make sense to the jury and judge in such a way to be acquitted. Understanding how the law works is one thing, but perhaps more important is understanding and conveying the human interaction that goes into the actions that allegedly took place, and depicting them in such a way that both parties—those in the legal system and those whose actions are being judged—agree. The more successful attorneys are those who are adept at translating between rich and poor, male and female, American and "alien," young and adult, housed and homeless, and so on. Nowhere is this act of bridging cultural differences more subtle, and more essential, than in the case of the public defender.

Cultural interactions take place both in and outside the court and between parties speaking English (in any of its varieties) and other languages to one another. Consider some of the following arenas or aspects of human communication, critical to eventual determinations of innocence or guilt, where cultural backgrounds determine in large part how people interact with one another:

- translation (formal and informal, named and unnamed): in court and during the investigation stage, or between languages and between conversational English and highly specialized legal English.
- disclosure: decisions (by all parties) whether to release or withhold information, and understanding about what can or should not be said.
- communication (spoken and

written): between the parties involved, in and outside the official process, and including such matters as who is allowed or expected to say what to whom (including, for example, handwritten notes to judges testifying to defendants' character, etc.),

- interactions: especially between defendants and people within the "criminal justice system" (where racism, class, gender, and cultural differences all play a large role in determining what kinds of interactions can possibly occur), such as police, representatives of the correctional system, and unsympathetic bureaucrats who have little recognition of cultural or language differences,
- stereotypic assumptions: including such factors as the way people talk and how people are talked to, for example, how male judges address women in domestic abuse cases, how welfare mothers are treated in family court, how homeless people are treated by judges and police, etc.

Considering only the structure of the legal system and the *law* as practiced and applied would be to miss the myriad cultural interactions that take place from the day of any alleged crime. Every day, individuals negotiate within a system in hundreds of ways, adapting social networks, frameworks, or systems for their own purposes, using, accessing, modifying, sidestepping, and breaking rules and norms as necessary. Outside the process of litigation the actors draw on their cultural understandings of justice all the time. So many of their actions are derived at the level of their personal belief systems—belief about right and wrong, justice and injustice, certainly, but also beliefs about who has power in this society, beliefs about money, about the legal system, sometimes about divine assistance, about the strength of one's reputation. These fundamentally cultural matters—and this level and perspective of approaching and analyzing events and experiences—have been overlooked in formal studies of justice, but must be intuited by successful defenders.

Significantly, public defenders see their task as different from that of the prosecutor, and more challenging. Defenders emphasize that it takes creativity to be an effective defense attorney, that unlike prosecutors—for whom the case is largely spelled out by police investigators—the defender has to build from scratch. Mingo Stroeber, chief of the juvenile unit at the Defender Association of Philadelphia, says, "I think criminal defense work is far more interesting, number one. I mean, it's not tough to be a prosecutor: You know what the case is about before you start, you know what your witnesses are going to say, and you just call them to the stand and ask them what happened. It's not real challenging as far as I'm concerned." She continues, "The more challenging aspect of criminal law is... figuring out what your defense is, what your theory is, coming up with strategies: how are you going to punch holes in the D.A.'s case?"

But such an effective defense, as any sharp public defender will articulate, requires not merely a thorough knowledge of the law, but even more a fluency with the system as it exists behind the letter of the law. That is, a good defense attorney must be familiar with the rules and standards of all the different parties in a case: the culture of the courtroom, the expectations and prejudices the jury brings with them, the workings of the district attorney's office, the customary behavior and intentions of the police, and of course, the values of the accused. There can be so many groups in the courtroom, each bringing in their own set of class, racial and ethnic, gender, occupational, and religious values, assumptions, and biases, that the skillful lawyer must navigate through all systems—often at once—to produce a winning result. The most successful attorneys even have to be aware of how the culture of the prosecutor's office and the culture of the police department can have an impact on their investigation and prosecution of a case. Defenders must learn how to win the respect of the police and D.A.'s office for the work they are doing, by being honest, rigorous, and serious in their claims.

Then they have to present that to the jury, which usually comes from a totally different cultural milieu. "I was surprised in a way, when I . . . first started dealing with so-called criminals," says Paul Conway, the chief of the special defense unit at the Defender Association of Philadelphia. "One of the things that surprised me the most at first was how ordinary the people were. ... I came from a background which is your basic person that believes that everybody gets out of jail... that nobody goes to jail, everybody gets probation, there's all these loopholes, that everybody gets off on the loopholes, the technicalities, somebody didn't do this, or didn't do that, and all of a sudden you just walk out of jail on a murder case or something, because somebody didn't do something... One of the things I saw was how ordinary the people were..." And yet, as a lawyer, rather than juror, he can—and must—step outside the proceedings and take in the larger perspective. "The system was so stacked against you that when I went first came in there I liked that challenge ...it's me against them, you went in there, you went into the courtroom by yourself. Everybody else, they had everything, they had the cops... everything you know, they had everybody and you didn't have anything. And... I sensed how unfair the system was... I think that sort of pushes you on a little....The way the system was set up... you're assumed to be guilty and it wasn't the way it's supposed to be. In other words, you're supposed to be presumed innocent but when you see it, it's not really that way. You're presumed guilty unless you can show you're innocent."

The most effective lawyers know that it is necessary to master the ability to switch back and forth, to speak with equal ease to the judge, jury, D.A., witnesses and client, though they may come from vastly different backgrounds and cultures. Sometimes the cultural differences are as broad as different nationalities or class and educational background. Sometimes they can depend merely on what side of the bench one sits on, who's wearing the handcuffs and who's applying them, when people might otherwise have grown up in the same neighborhood.

There's nothing in the law itself that expresses or articulates these differences. As Jules Epstein notes, echoing other defenders, "After . . . years of making mistakes you pick up different things and start to get a sense of what may work. And I listen a great deal . . . Believe me, you don't learn this at law school." The lawyers have to pick this up orally, from the everyday speech of lawyer-client and lawyer-lawyer interactions to the more formalized and codified speech rules of the court system. The variables that can decide someone's guilt or innocence—as much as people representing the legal system would like us to believe are all spelled out in the law itself—are to a great extent found in these oral human interactions that go beyond statute and into the varieties of speech and non-verbal communication. In other words, what matters is not just a mastery of the judicial system, but also the *para*judicial variables, almost unlimited in number, that weave in and out of that system.

At a very subtle level, defenders deal with cultural differences not even recognized by the legal system as potentially problematic, differences in class and education, gender, religion and moral values. People coming from cultures where there is a widespread belief that the system is rigged against defendants—nations such as China or cultures such as working-class African American, Latino, or Asian American neighborhoods in this country or homeless people and refugees anywhere—will approach meetings with their defense lawyers differently than those with more faith in a system that has treated them all along with more fairness and respect. A good attorney must be aware of this, particularly one engaged in criminal defense.

The strategizing that the defender does includes taking all these variables into account, including the facts of the case and the background of the specific players. But all this is worked out in an atmosphere far from being logical, cool, and rational. For many, the courtroom is the pressure cooker in which all the subtle ingredients, the cultural factors, the facts of the case, the backgrounds of the individuals involved, and the social history of the U.S. legal system, simmer. "It's probably the closest thing to combat that you can run into in the civilized world," Conway observes. "There's a war going on in the courtroom, I mean you're just fighting the other side, they're fighting you . . . and then there's a result, and you know how you did. Twelve people come up there and tell you how you did. You know. And the problem with the system is that innocence isn't a defense. [A]nd now [the Supreme Court is] saying that it's not even a defense if they're going to kill you. The Supreme Court! Which is scary. I mean that's really scary. When they're coming out and saying it. Everybody always knew that . . . innocence wasn't a defense. In other words you could be innocent, if they have enough evidence . . . to convince twelve people you're guilty, then legally you're guilty. And that's the scary part of the system. . . .

You're basically there alone. You're sitting in there alone. Next to some young kid who everyone else is trying to put away for the rest of their life and there's a lot of pressure. You know, nobody can realize that until they've been there. You can't realize what kind of pressure it is . . . That kind of emotion, unless you really see that kind, I mean they put this stuff on TV, it's like cartoons that's supposed to be like this drama, about juries and stuff like that. The real thing is much more intense and suspenseful then what they portray on TV."

If we recognize, as the strongest defenders do, that much of the legal process occurs outside the official channels of dispute and litigation, our skills can be put to use helping to provide access to the legal system for those who may not realize the extent to which they can have or deserve access (as in the case of undocumented immigrants, for example). Almost more importantly, perhaps, understanding different belief systems about justice can help lawyers understand the complexities of unofficial culture—e.g. how to locate good translators, the historical background of refugee communities, why alibis may be hard to come by for factory or agricultural day workers, etc.—and can help the dominant culture recognize the vast array of legitimate alternative cultures and belief systems that coexist in our society. That's a necessary first step, especially when lawyers recognize how all-encompassing the entire process is, incorporating ideas at all levels from personal beliefs about justice and the legal system, to traditional communication strategies outside of court, to the legal system and prison system itself, to the history of the people involved in the dispute.

All lawyers are involved in a matter of translation to a degree, repackaging the facts in the most effective manner possible. But public defenders, more than any other group, confront immediate and tangible injustices where differences in class and race can lead to the loss of freedom at the hands of the state. Bridging the cultural gaps for defenders is even more than an empathethic response. At any point it can become a tool for their client's survival.

—Bill Westerman

This essay draws from the PFP's "Law and Culture Project," an attempt to explore the cultural foundations of the legal system and bridge some of the cultural gap between lawyers and the wider public. During the course of the last year, I interviewed people on different sides of legal matters: consumers as well as representatives of the legal system, coordinated community discussions and "speakouts" in collaboration with people at Project H.O.M.E., Kensington Joint Action Council, Asian Americans United, the American Friends Service Committee, and PhilaLink for Haiti. Handbooks of useful information for consumers and lawyers, as well as a fuller written report, are some results of the project, thus far. Thanks to the following people for their help: Jules Epstein, John Fong, Stephen Gold, Germaine Ingram, Jeremy Nowak, Mingo Stroeber, Paul Conway, Michael Carroll, Helen Levin, Billy Wang, Milagros Cisneros, Carole Metellus, Huan Tran, Bob Sicoransa, Chris Schweitzer, Cliff Lee, Carl Anderson, Sandy Ballard, Will O'Brien, Sr. Mary Scullion, Thoai Huynh, Jonathan Loo, Peter Schneider, Chansamone Sipasert, Felipe Restrepo, Dabney Miller, Emma Oh, Alan Yatvin, Teresa Carr Deni, Pat Finio, Phayvanh Sybalath, Willie Baptist, and Cathlin Baker.

Venerable Sam Sukhuen and attorney Jules Epstein discuss character witnesses. Photo: Bill Westerman

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Works-in-Progress, the newsletter of the Philadelphia Folklore Project, is published three times a year. Members also receive NEWS mailings with information about opportunities and events four times each year. We sponsor a range of events, provide technical assistance, and produce resources. For information about membership, please see the back cover, or call us at 238-0096.

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MARCH 11, 1994

It's back

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FOLK ART
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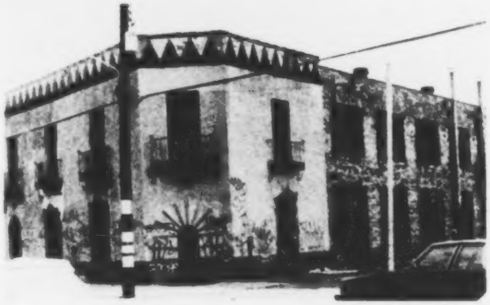
Samuel Yellin Metalworks: A Folklife Perspective on a Preservation Project

Luigi Boccanera at the Yellin forge, c. mid-1920s.



Samuel Yellin Metalworkers, exterior 1993

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Built in 1915, the Yellin Metalworks is the only industrial building that the architectural firm of Mellor and Meigs ever designed. The fact that the firm took on this building is the first indication that the work it housed and symbolized transcended the often alienating and artless effects of modern economic life. Samuel Yellin, an accomplished and prolific ornamental blacksmith, had a close friendship and working relationship with Walter Mellor and Arthur Meigs. All three had intense devotion to traditional design, and both individually and collaboratively they were united in the spirit of the Arts and Crafts philosophy.

The material and structural integrity of the building show that Yellin and his architects were committed to making it correlate with their own Antimodern vision and adhere to the tenets of traditional design. From its very conception it was a metaphorical expression of Yellin's occupational philosophy and a determined antidote to late 19th-early 20th century fragmented work experience. Advancing the necessity of the brotherhood of craftsmen, Mellor and Meigs provided the designs free of charge, and Yellin reciprocated the gesture producing free ironwork for their own residences. The idealism that infused the relationship between Mellor, Meigs and Yellin—a craftsman/artist ethic reflected in the Yellin Metalworks architectural integrity—set the tone for what was to ensue in this building.

During its history, the Yellin Metalworks building has undergone minimal alterations. The twentieth century's economic changes have dictated (with often problematic results) frequent transformations of craft practice and occupational space, yet the Yellin building's unchanging character shows how firmly its aesthetics and structure were connected to Samuel's, and later to his son Harvey's, work standards. There are arguably few buildings, of this type and from this era, that so soundly reconcile artful design and actual use. This probably stemmed from the shared sensibility of Walter Mellor, Arthur Meigs, and Samuel Yellin. This building fully encapsulates a profoundly meaningful context of craftsman/client relations and artifact production. To a remarkable degree, its space, structure, remaining tools and fittings embody Yellin's craft philosophy and occupational legacy.

Samuel Yellin had a consistently academic outlook—a rigorous, artfully informed consciousness that stemmed from the European master craftsman tradition. His training began when he was 12, and he received his master's certificate 5 years later. Before emigrating to America, he traveled to, and worked in, a number of European cities. Yellin emerged from this time period thoroughly aware of the history and diversity of European blacksmithing and proficient in 4 or 5 languages. Around 1909, having been in Philadelphia only a short time, Yellin was appointed an instructor at the Museum School of Industrial Art (now the University of the Arts). All of this took place while Yellin was in his early to mid-20s. Yellin valued education and didn't separate it from the business of work. His attitude toward education infused every corner of the building. His own apprentices were a constant presence in the building's two largest spaces—the forging room on the first floor and the fabrication room on the second floor.

The drafting room on the second floor, which provided space for 11 to 13 draftsmen, was in addition a classroom for blacksmithing and drafting instruction. Adjacent to the drafting room is the archive/library. Both of these rooms were of the utmost importance in the Yellin operation. Yellin recognized that a division of labor was necessary to make his shop competitive in the early 20th century. But he was determined not to let this prospect negate the collective communication and individual creativity that rooted traditional artisanry. To this end, he insisted that all his workers fully understand each other's jobs. Such an approach necessitated an ongoing educational program that Yellin achieved through the drafting room/classroom and archive/library spaces. Yellin was ultimately trying to make work more meaningful through the use of these two spaces. The rooms still evoke their

The forge room: Chris Tierney working at the forge. Photos: Michael J. Chiarappa, 1993

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original purpose. Built-in cabinets, shelving, exposed beams and large illuminating French doors are intact, along with the original spatial configurations of both rooms.

The fabrication room is the largest space on the second floor and it is the area where metalworks projects were assembled, sanded, filed, cleaned, and finished. The work here was detail-oriented, also described as "bench work" or "fine work" requiring smaller hammers, and anvils of 20 to 30 pounds. The room once contained a number of motor-driven tools used in the assembly and finishing process. Among these tools were numerous drill presses, a belt sander, and possibly a welding machine. This room still contains a large belt-driven lathe along the east wall which dates from the early Yellin years. Along the west wall are the building's original benches that were used for finishing work. The room also contains some original cabinetry.

The brick walls, heavy timber framing system, large multi-light windows, and wood floor of the fabrication room eloquently communicate the structure's use patterns over the years. The wear marks in the wood floor immediately evoke the activity that took place in the room, and communicate both the building's history and the culture it fostered. They provide a sense of place, connecting us to the actual craft process and its occupational folklife; Italian and Italian-American blacksmiths listened to opera and sang along while working in this room.

The forge area, described by Samuel Yellin' s granddaughter Clare as the "heart and soul of the shop," has, like the rest of the building, admirably retained its original architectural integrity. The structural integrity is attributable to the soundness of the original design, and its adherence to Yellin's occupational ideals. Considering the complex changes that have effected craft work over the twentieth century, it is significant that this space steadfastly served the Yellin operation's needs and necessitated few alterations.

Preserved in their original form, the large multi-light windows, and the large sliding door that is adjacent to them, can serve an adaptive re-use scheme as efficiently as they did the blacksmiths who once occupied this space. The same can be said of many other features of the building, from the basement—where Yellin blacksmiths ate lunch and socialized around a working fireplace—to Samuel Yellin's own drawing room and study where the master surrounded himself with drawings, engravings, and prize pieces, entertained guests and had conferences. As with most parts of the Yellin building, this room has scarcely changed at all since Yellin used it, and it continues to embody his craft philosophy and occupational legacy.

Yellin said of himself, "I am a staunch advocate of tradition in matters of design. I think that we should follow the lead of past masters and seek inspiration from their wonderful work. They saw the poetry and rhythm of iron. Out of it they made masterpieces not for a day or an hour, but for the ages. We should go back to them for our ideas in craftsmanship, to their simplicity and thoughtfulness. The superficial and and the tricky, which are spreading over the world of art like a disease, doom themselves to destruction. The beautiful can never die."* His building carries on this legacy.

—Michael J. Chiarappa and Ralph Muldrow

*Speech to the Architectural Club of Chicago, March 9, 1926; quoted in Jack Andrews, *Samuel Yellin, Ironworker*, pp. 72-73.

Over the past year, thanks to the generosity of Clare and Marian Yellin, the Philadelphia Folklore Project has been exploring ways in which the Samuel Yellin Metalworkers building might be adapted and modified to take on a second life as a folk cultural center under the aegis of the Haddington Community Development Corporation. We are grateful to Preservation Pennsylvania for providing funds for a feasibility study conducted by Kelly/Maiello Architects with the help of the Preservation Coalition. This essay is excerpted from a report highlighting preservation priorities for any reuse. (The full report will be available in January as a PFP working paper). Currently, we are trying to raise funds to undertake a folklife survey of the area to assess folk cultural resources and community needs as a next step toward preserving the building and the Haddington Community Development Corporation is pursuing acquisition of the building.

Community-Based Rhythms Against Violence: African American Marching Units in Philadelphia

As a child growing up in North Philadelphia in the 1960s, I remember watching the Elks Parades marching down what was then Columbia Avenue. Those bugle corps, drill teams, and color guards offered amazing rhythmic patterns, stamping their feet to military cadences. Mostly I remember very strict military drills—and the Challengers Drill Team is the one I remember best. I wanted so much to become a part of their performance but my mother, Ardelia Darby, wouldn't allow me to join because she considered the Challengers "rival gang members." By the mid to late 1970s, gang wars in this city had escalated to include homicide. The victims were mostly African American men and African American activist organizations and politicians joined forces to stop both gangs and killings. One of their solutions then (and it is a strategy that continues to this day) was to provide alternatives for youth, like drill teams. But like many other African American youth of the era, I eventually became involved in clubs and groups in which dance and movement were a central part of our expressive culture. Eventually, I joined the 21st and Norris section of the largest North Philadelphia gang, the Valley Gang. And when adult community activists effected a break-up of the gangs, as youth, our answer was the formation of "sister and brother" clubs such as Sigma Theta Phi and Kappa Alpha Centuri. There were probably 150 such clubs around the city. I was a member of Sigma Theta Phi. We organized socials with other clubs and sometimes had competitions to show which club had the best dancers. I won a plaque from Beta Phi Groove as the best girl dancer. The complex relations between youth gangs, community-based anti-violence efforts, and traditional movement arts certainly predates my own history, but these shifting and significant formations deserve to be studied and appreciated. This is a modest start.

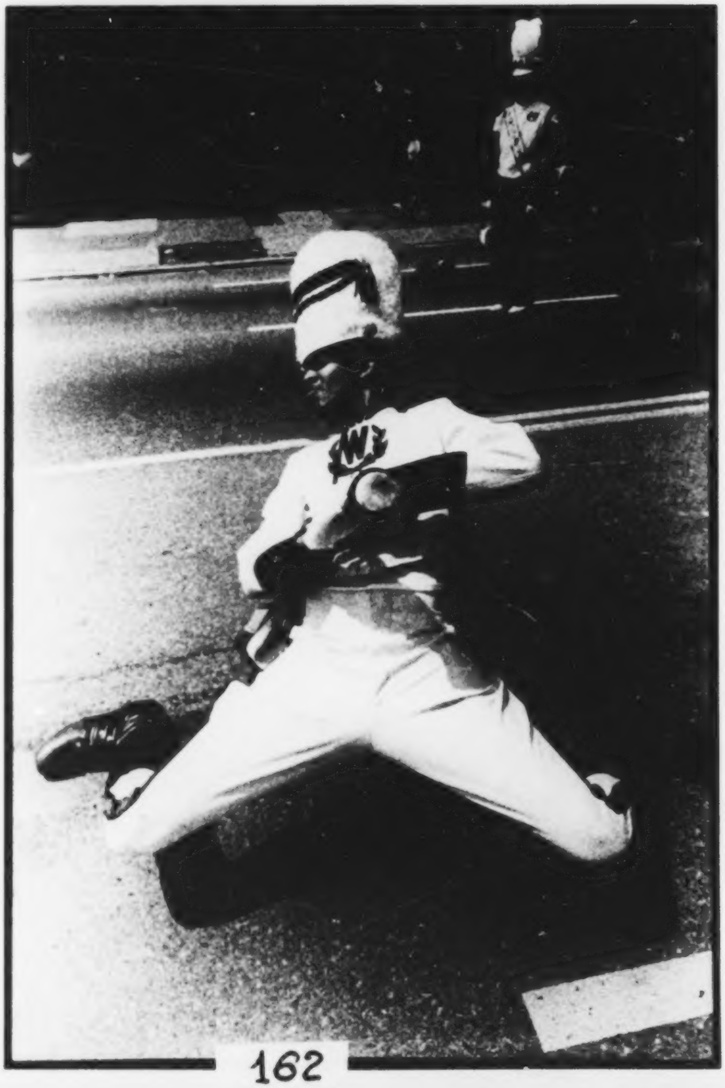
Today, drill teams practice and perform in many parts of the city—and represent a wide range of influences and traditions. Dressed in military regalia, youths and adults step proudly to the drummers' beat. Some teams beat the rhythm with body parts: hands, feet, arms, legs. Others use their voices to set the beat. Theatrical presentations of color guards using various props can be found. Some newly formed groups are including African American vernacular dance forms from hip-hop to break dancing. Others have included traditional African textiles in their costumes and use the African-derived masquerade of the stiltwalker as part of their performance. There is a lively informal creativity demonstrated by youthful steppers, cheerleaders and dancers in schoolyards and streets, while parades and a complex system of competitions offer structured challenges to drill teams and formalize certain required styles or conventions. But the structures themselves provide points of departure for creativity. Team leaders routinely ask the judge for permission to perform—and upon approval, the performance begins—perhaps incorporating basic African rhythmic movements, hip hop or house dance styles into "fancy trick drills" and "military drills." Each team develops its own signatures and styles, and groups know each other for these innovations.

African American Philadelphians can easily recall at least three generations of drill teams and marching units. Drum and bugle corps proliferated in the 1950s, organized by those who had returned from the United States military service. The tradition itself goes much further back: African American drills have roots in African rhythmic traditions, in African American experience, and in the remodeling of pre-colonial militia and Civil War military drills. Generations of African American servicemen shaped this art form, brought it home, mixed it with other movement arts. Fraternity

PIZZA
LENTED BLACK SOULS
DRILL TEAM

stepping, street drills and dance, drum and bugle corps are all results of this process. Historically, many such organizations have existed in Philadelphia under the auspices of community-oriented groups. For the most part, these organizations are said to have evolved out of the need to do something for the children in the community, to facilitate a viable apparatus that would teach African American people about their cultural heritage, or to provide youth with the discipline of military drills and stepping performances. Some people invest countless hours in teaching or participating in drill teams simply because they love it. And youth themselves, as my experience suggests, create groups in which movement and dance are used both for social and competitive reasons. Presentations of stepping and drilling now include many distinct types; most use cadences that include rhythmic oratory and body movements, dance and music.

Over the past few months we here at the Philadelphia Folklore Project have undertaken the task of observing and documenting some African-derived dance and movement arts as they are created and performed locally. We plan to publish a modest guide to some of the



Photographs from Africamericas Parades, c. 1990-91 by Thomas B. Morton

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Youth of East Logan, c. 1988.

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organizations that in different ways present and preserve these arts currently, including drill teams, stepping, double-dutch, street dance, drum and bugle corps, dance troupes, and ritual traditions. If you have been in any way involved in these areas, or if you can refer us to others, we ask you to contact Benita Binta Brown or Jennifer Michael here at the PFP office (238-0096) so that we can include you in this project. In what follows, we provide short excerpts from the longer profiles that we are compiling about various groups. If you are interested in receiving information when the guide is published, call us.

The Alpha Omega Phi Drill Masters started in 1973 to provide an activity for children in the community around 38th and Girard. The original team disbanded after the first generation of participants grew up. But three years ago the team was resurrected, and children of some of the original members are now taking part in what their parents began. At least one of these original members, Dwight Jones, dates his own involvement in drill teams back a previous generation to the West Philadelphia Drill Masters, an organization he joined in 1959 at age nine (and after which the Alpha Omega Phi group is partly named). Lewis "Bugsby" Claybourne was the earlier group's founder, and it was from him that Jones learned military drills. The Alpha Omega Phi Drill Masters currently have more than fifty drills in their repertoire, including both military and semi-military drills. Performing with no drum or bugle line, team members skillfully create their own beats and stomp out rhythmic patterns with the help of taps fixed to their military boots. In some cases, they are performing cadences derived from those performed in the 1950s by the West Philadelphia Drill Masters. Contact: Pauline Tate, Director, 3814 Wyalusing Avenue, Phila., PA 19104, 386-4677

The American Defenders Drum And Bugle Corps. The American Defenders Post No. 968 was co-founded by Thomas Newlin and a group of other WWII veterans in1956, with a charter emphasizing service to the community, state and nation. Over the years, they established four baseball teams, two Boy Scout troops, and, in 1965, a drum and bugle corps in their West Tioga community. The American Defenders Drum and Bugle Corps is composed of a color guard, fancy drill flag line, fancy drill rifle line, drill team, horn line and drum line. The drill team's presentation includes military drills and hip-hop dance. For competition, it is classified as Fancy Precision Drilling because it mimics actual military drills but adds dance steps (thereby making it "fancy militia.") The unit instructors are all former members of drum and bugle corps, including The American Defenders Drum and Bugle Corps. Chapman previously belonged to the Veterans of Foreign

Wars marching unit. Contact: Robert H. Stratton, Co-Director. 2111 W. Tioga St., Phila., PA 19140. 228-9706

The Blackhawks Athletic Club began in 1968 to give local young people an alternative to participation in street gangs. Since that time, the organization's focus has shifted to emphasize teaching African American youth a new value orientation. This training is based on the Nguzo Saba, whose seven principles, developed by Dr. Maulana Karenga in the mid 1960s, form the core of Kwanzaa observances. The Blackhawks Cheerleader Dance Team, started in 1987, performs only for Blackhawks football games and competitions. The team creates its own songs and chants, mainly in a call-and-response idiom. They use basic arrangements of dance, cheers and chants and, according to Director Mtumishi, use the Kwanzaa principle of Kuumba (creativity) to make these forms their own. Contact: Reginald Mtumishi, Director. 1542 Fountain Street, Phila., Pa. 19121. 769-7324

The Extraordinnaire Drill Team is a part of University City's Mantua Against Drugs (MAD), founded in 1989 in response to the drug problem emerging at that time. The organization's goal was to provide creative activities which might influence children in positive ways. The drill team itself is young, but gave more than thirty performances during its first year. Contact: Shelda Glover, Director. 5119 Spruce Street, Phila., PA., 19139. 474-1562

The Light Brigade Color Guard began in 1976 when Sheila Henderson was approached by young people from the American Legion Color Guard of Darby and the Golden Knights of North Philadelphia about developing a new color guard. The group now operates its three units—Juniors, Open Class Guard, and Senior Guard—between August and May of each year. The units march and dance while carrying flags and rifles. Henderson explains that the Light Brigade should not be considered a drill team, because its performances, with their special costumes, props and equipment, are more like Broadway productions than drills. The women board members help with producing the items needed, painting backdrops and building platforms.The Light Brigade seldom participates in parades, saving most of its efforts for regional, national, and international competitions. Contact: Sheila Henderson, Director. 7373 Ridge Avenue, Apt. #308, Phila., Pa. 19128. 483-7187

Northeast Boys and Girls Club Drill Team. The Lloyd C. Wilson Memorial Post No. 224 Northeast Boys and Girls Drill Team was organized in 1989 to give young people a positive activity that would keep them off the street and boost their self esteem. The full drill team includes a Junior Squad, a Senior Squad, and a Drum Line. Their performances feature both dance and military steps choreographed by drill instructor Mark Williams, whose routines draw on both his military drill experience and his familiarity with vernacular dance forms. In recent competition the team's style was classed as "fancy," but Williams believes it is more like military with hip-hop. Contact: Jacqueline Williams, Public Relations. Lloyd C. Wilson Memorial Post No. 224, 1806 Kinsey Street, Phila., PA. 19124. 537-9438

The Ogontz Steppers Drill Team and Drum Corps grew out of the Ogontz Club for Boys. The Baseball Club was formed April, 1985. The Drill Team was formed April, 1990. The aim of the organization was to offer alternative activities to neighborhood youth. Drawing on military-style discipline, the organization seeks to challenge young people and strengthen their skills by encouraging them to compete with the drill team on both local and national levels. The Ogontz Steppers' performances are characterized by precision drills that lead into dance routines, a style categorized for competition as "Fancy Trick Drill." Katheriene Reid and her husband, Drexel Reid, are the primary instructors of the drill team and drum corps. Every Saturday and Sunday during her childhood, Katheriene watched the Charles Young Post of Veterans of Foreign Wars drill team practice. Although her parents would not allow her to join the drill team, she learned enough from watching these rehearsals to be able to create routines and teach them to the Color Guard. Responsibility for the Drum Corps lies with Drexel Reid, who joined the Highway Patrol Motorcycle Drill Team in the 1960s and became its first African American instructor in the 1980s.

Unidentified marcher at Africamericas Parade, c. 1990

Photos: Thomas B. Morton

Contact: Katheriene Reid, Director, 8553 Forest Ave., Phila., PA 19150, 242-1332

Pyramid Temple Color Guard. In the 1960s and 1970s, Barry Carter marched with the American Defenders Color Guard under the direction of his father, George Carter. He formed the Pyramid Temple Color Guard in 1980. While the group now has only a drum line and a flag line, they hope eventually to include a bugle line. The Pyramid Temple Color Guard marches in a drum and bugle corps style distinct from that of a drill team. This style derives from military technique and demands musical exactness, whether the specially orchestrated music derives from classical, jazz, or country-and-western. Barry Carter explains that you can tell the difference between a drill team, a band and a drum and bugle corps by listening to the way the drums are played: "If a band plays rolls like a drum corps, anyone who knows will turn their head and say 'Oh, it's a band trying to play like a drum corps'." Contact: Barry Carter, Director, 1521-23 W. Girard Ave., Phila. PA 19121. 229-3926

The Road Raiders Drill Team of Germantown. In August of 1990, six girls approached Alice Fishburn about leading a drill team in their neighborhood. She put them off at first, doubtful as to whether she wanted to undertake such an endeavor. But the next day when she saw the girls standing in the rain outside her door to hear her response, she said to herself, "Lord, I guess this is it." And so began the Road Raiders Drill Team. The team's underlying aim is to provide local youth with an alternative to becoming involved in drugs. The Road Raiders are characterized as a Fancy Drill Team. Fishburn describes fancy drills as falling somewhere between military drills and dance routines. They are performed to beats from the drum line, which includes two bass drums, two

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ertory. Laura Smith is the
nder and Carla Robinson is
and Drill Commander.
: Alice Fishburn, Director
Fishburn, Assistant
844-0302

Sonic Blasters. In 1990, a
young women, all of
ved in the 3100 block of
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he Sonic Blasters thus
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heir auspices, the Sonic
Drill Team became oriented
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g people discipline and
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are. Director Fatimah Bey believes in building self-esteem through visualization and a focus on Africa. The team mixes elements of African and American culture in their art forms to present both aspects of their experience as African Americans. With feet, arms, legs, thighs, hands and heads, the Sonic Blasters tell a non-verbal story in rhythm. Contact: Fatimah Bey, Director, 3114 W. Berks St., Phila., PA 19121. 763-0835

West Philadelphia Conestoga Angels. The West Philadelphia Conestoga Angels was founded in 1987 by Celestine Marks and her husband, the late Arthur Marks. Since her husband's death, Celestine Marks has taken over the direction of the organization. David Boyd is head drill instructor and Arthina Marks is assistant. Marks' primary aim is to help team members achieve their academic and professional goals, and her success shows in the fact that most young people leaving the group have gone on to attend college or to join the military. About 50 young people—ages 5 to 20—now participate in the six units of the Conestoga Angels. The "A" squad performs a variety of military and fancy drills; the "B" squad includes girls in training for the "A" squad. Other performing units include the Junior Drillers, the Flag Squad, the Boys Military Squad, and a new, all-girl Drum Corps. Celestine Marks was a majorette for the Elks, a majorette and cheerleader at Muriel Dobbins Vocational High School, and a member of the Top Cats Drum Corps in South Philadelphia. She and her daughter choreograph and teach many of the Conestoga Angels' movements. Their performances include military drills, for which the girls wear a military look, and a mixture of contemporary and older dance forms. Two of these drills are "Say No to Drugs," based on fraternity-type stepping, and "Static," which uses a James Brown beat and Temptations' movements. Contact: Celestine Marks, Director. 1520 N. Peach St., Phila., PA 19131. 473-3876

West Powelton Steppers. The West Powelton Steppers began in 1991 when a group of teenage girls asked the West Powelton Concerned Community Council to sponsor a drill team. Since the Council's purpose was to offer recreation to the community, its board elected to take up the girls' challenge and sponsor the team, which now boasts about forty members, ages 3 to 18. The West Powelton Steppers' routines are categorized as Open Class Dance Drills. They do no military drills; instead, their performances consist of fancy dance steps, which resemble the fast dance steps done by rappers, and call-and-response forms. In these latter, a leader calls for a step, and the group responds by performing the movement. Contact: Elsie Wise, Director. 4061 Filbert St., Phila., PA 19104. 386-3078.

Youth of East Logan Drill Team. In about 1976, a group of women calling themselves "Concerned Parents" organized to respond to the violence of teenage gangs forming in the neighborhood. They hoped to give kids a positive alternative to gangs and drugs. The Youth of East Logan Drill Team was formed as part of this effort. Its young members have shaped this drill team's success. They make up their own routines using hip-hop, African and Caribbean dance forms. As they grow older and progress through the organization, team members take on the roles of step master and captain. Step masters teach the steps, and captains are in charge of discipline. Director Harriet Knight attributes much of the team's success—including a state championship—to its strong emphasis on discipline. Their military-style uniforms, worn with pants, also stress the drill team's focus on structure. Contact: Harriet Knight, Director. 4745 N. Marvine St., Phila., PA 19141. 455-8931

—Benita Binta Brown, with Jennifer Michael

EAST COAST FEDERATION

Members of Conestoga Drill Team at practice. Photos: Debora Kodish, 1993

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Hal Taylor, 1921–1993: A Remembrance

In the small and select world of marionette makers, Hal Taylor was a master, adept in classical Belgian and French styles, and equally accomplished as ventriloquist and clown, cabinet maker, set designer, and actor in the vaudeville tradition.

For 25 years, Hal ran the Philadelphia Harlequin Puppetry Guild out of his cabinet making shop in Center City, where he steadily populated his shop window with marionettes from his growing collection. JoJo the Unicyclist, Tugboat Annie, CoCo the Clown, and Madam Fru Fru. In 1978 he founded the Philadelphia Marionette Theater and Museum with his companion Catherine Brownholtz and shortly afterwards, moved into an enormous brick building in South Philadelphia, a former settlement house. But without reliable funding for a staff, a publicity campaign, and equipment, its future seemed precarious at best. The Theater was not the stuff of media interest: the puppets were resolutely old-fashioned and the props simple, nor was Hal one to curry favor with the press. They spent the pittance from admissions and Cathy's public school teacher salary on the endless necessities of a working theater—a carving machine and a portable stage, muslin and mallets. PMTM remains the nation's only repertoire marionette theater, but for the past 16 years neither took a salary.

Hal Taylor and some of his marionettes in process. Photos: Debora Kodish, 1989

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At the point when I apprenticed to Hal in 1980, the Museum comprised boxes and boxes and *boxes* of puppets, toys and rocking horses that Hal had collected over a lifetime, which lined the dusty hallways and workrooms and which he pulled out and showed me occasionally. In 1985, the city gave them a 10-year lease to Playhouse in the Park, a huge and dilapidated collection of buildings in Fairmount Park, and Hal moved into a nearby converted sheep barn. At this new site, they hoped to establish a permanent theater and museum, with daily shows and ongoing apprenticeships.

The theater and workshop attracted dozens of artists and work-study students. But a lifetime of study and craftsmanship did not yield up easily to every would-be apprentice, nor could a few modest state grants and apprenticeships begin to pay operating costs. Hal expected a degree of commitment and attentiveness that has become a rare commodity these days. For Francis Tucker, who became a formal apprentice in 1989 through PFP's help, 10 or 12 classes passed before Hal warmed up to him. Francis (himself a respected, but modest, painter) admired Hal's craftsmanship, worked to earn that gruff warmth, and remembered him fondly as a man with a rough exterior and a good heart. In the last days when Hal was bedridden, Tucker brought books and games to him.

One learned puppetry from Hal in circuitous ways—offhand remarks, sleight of hand tricks and long yarns he would suddenly offer as he watched a person work. He spoke often of France during the war, when he volunteered as translator and ended up in Special Services entertaining the troops with his ventriloquist act, and when he could commandeer a jeep and a driver to take him out in the countryside to sketch. In our time, Hal and Cathy's parties were memorable affairs, with tables of food that they couldn't afford and all of their clown, circus, and accordion-playing friends. This was the heyday of the Muppet Show and I mentioned it once, cautiously sounding out his opinion, and started when he abruptly set down his coffee cup on the work bench. But he only said, shortly, "Jim Henson is *not a puppeteer*" and that was the end of the subject.

Cathy was one of very few who

knew Hal's private side: he remembered birthdays, was always truthful, generous to a fault, and an endless source of jokes and stories. Hal was a best friend, a once-in-a-lifetime companion. If not for Hal, "I'd be teaching school now, bored to death. Now I'm doing this." The PMT of today, with its vaudeville influence, odd collection of musical instruments, frenetic pace, and consumate craftsmanship reflect Hal's touch. Cathy has taken on his ventriloquist skit, but, she sighes, "it's all Hal's jokes, it's all him." "You would never see me talk, introduce the show," she pointed out. Now recalling his style, she recites his favorite skits, acting out both parts, and seizing puppets and props as needed, imitating the audience response.

"Kids these days are the same," he would remark, looking out over a squirming audience of 5-year-olds. "They don't need television, or videos, or fancy entertainment. They like slapstick, Punch and Judy, corny jokes—the same stuff." He understood marionettes as neither real nor as mere wooden figures; their life came from the puppeteer. As he told an Inquirer reporter once, "you transfer your feelings through the strings into the figure. That makes a good marionette operator, who can really transfer himself into the figures and not think of it as a little thing made of wood."

The first part of any performance generally involved Hal and Cathy's clown act. Already by the point when I knew him in 1980, arthritis had started to take over his hips and both hands. He would take aspirin and strong coffee just before show time and set his cane, just so, on the edge of the stage. "Clowns don't smoke cigarettes or eat or drink. And they can't use canes," he reminded me. He was carried through each performance on the strength of aspirin and applause.

In these days, I was the stage crew of one, and became adept at the curtains, props, arranging puppets in order of their appearances and operating their sad sack sound system. But once in the middle of a performance Hal called me up on the bridge and pushed a puppet control in my hands. I struggled on, doing badly, appalled by the puppet's weight and the number of strings. Afterwards Hal offered some pointers in his usual clipped way. The puppet has to stand upright on the stage. Just rest its feet on the platform — not too heavily or the knees will bend and not three inches above the stage as mine had done. OK, I made it gesture, walk a few steps, trying to make it act right. "No, that's wrong, just . . . no, don't worry about the strings, put yourself there . . . like this." He gestured vaguely to me, then at the puppet. "Walk across the stage." I looked down hopefully at my puppet 6 feet below. And just like that, it walked across the stage!

Hal Taylor died on August 20 at the age of 73. The Theater, still at its Fairmount Park location, continues to perform five shows and is a favored destination for Philadelphians of the younger set. Cathy is determined to see it continue and expand, "I'm on automatic, after 12 years . . . It's in my blood." Its future location remains unclear—in debt for renovations to the facilities, and threatened by the city's offer to raze the entire complex and parcel up the theater and museum to various larger institutions.

—Karen Buchholz

We thank you

Thanks to recent members: Bernard & Audrey Buchholz, Hanny Budnick, Dr. Edward Carter II, Evelyn & Bernard Cleff, Peter Cucciara, Helen Cunningham, Jules Epstein, Susan & Michael Fair, Russell Fawley, Jr., Patricia Finio, LeeEllen Friedland, Janet Golden, Charles Haines, Lorrie Heagy, Helen Henry, Germaine Ingram, Joseph & Bridget Kasinskas, Eve Kazakauskas, Richard Kennedy, Carol Kessler, Thomas Kramer, Susan Levitas & Nick Spitzer, Palma & John Lucas, Marsha MacDowell, Claire Maier, Charles Mather III, Shirley Maze, Jean & Daniel McCoubrey, Ann Miller, Kathryn Morgan, Richard Myers, Jeremy Nowak, Elizabeth Null, Sarah Oldham, Patricia Pancioli, Carol A. Parssinen, PATHS/PRISM, John & Fiona Patterson, Sally Peterson & Glen Hinson, Sandy Pomerantz, Marci Reaven, Peter Renzetti, Janis Risch, Harriet Rubenstein, Erwin F. Schoenewaldt, School in Rose Valley, Yaira Shapiro, Donald & Janet Sholl, Linda Shopes, Elaine and Stan Silverman, Bob Simpson, Anne Sims, Steve Smith, Carol M. Spawn, Judith & Jonathan Stein, Neville Strumpf, John Suter, Evelyn Tecosky, Mr. & Mrs. Walter Trespasz, Aviva Weintraub, Helene Weis, Bill Westerman, Joyce White, Ruth Mobley Williams, Robert Wood, Clare Yellin, Chamroeun Yin, David Zuckerman.

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We are committed to paying attention to the fundamental ways in which people organize, understand, and share their experiences and knowledge. . . We're a 7- year-old independent public folklife agency with local roots, scholarly perspectives, activist programs, and a commitment to taking arts and culture seriously. We assist artists and communities, conduct research, organize around issues of concern, develop exhibitions, offer public programs, workshops and technical assistance, maintain an archive, and issue publications and resources. If you value our work, please join us. If you're curious and want to learn more, please give us a call (238-0096). And tell your friends. Thanks to a Challenge grant from the Philadelphia Foundation, the funds you donate will earn us additional dollars.

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WORKS IN PROGRESS

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Special double issue

Right: Dottie and John Wilkie doing the bop at ODUNDE's "From Hucklebuck to Hip Hop" cabaret. Photo: Thomas B. Morton, 1994.

Below: Lee Carter and his paintings of the Underground Railroad. Photo: Bill Westerman, 1994.

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From Hucklebuck to Hip-Hop: ODUNDE goes dancing

I walked into our first "From Hucklebuck to Hip-Hop" dance wearing my '40s outfit, with a blouse with a Peter Pan collar and I saw all the folks in the gym, and looked at Sam Reed (who used to be the house band at our Uptown Theater) and his band. And it was really something. We had a cabaret-style dance. There was some cutting and people felt free to dance. About 900 people came to the first two dances, and we hope to plan more events for next year. And it took me back. And when I looked around and saw folks that I know and saw Gus Lacy's son—they were saying that this took them back, too. For some people, they were dancing in the same spot they had danced twenty, thirty, forty years before. But their children could come, and sometimes even their children's children. And we truly brought the generations together.—Lois Fernandez

Janet Starling and a friend doing the bop. Photo: Thomas B. Morton, 1994

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ODUNDE's venture into dance began with the idea that African American vernacular dance—dance that people create in homes and clubs—is a tremendously significant expressive tradition in our community. We decided that we needed to explore this urban traditional community dance in South Philadelphia. We know that African American dances represent the folk roots of popular dance styles. Nationally-viewed Philadelphia programs like American Bandstand presented watered-down versions of African American dance to the nation, while keeping African Americans off of their show. But, in our own neighborhoods, people were creating dances that pop fads then tried to imitate. Says dancer Karen Warrington, "You had to be in our social circles and neighborhoods to see dance happening. Plus, it was always changing. Certain dances were emerging; you had to be there to see it." So with this project, we have gone to the people who were there.

John Wilkie recognized the significance of social dance when he described himself dancing as a teenager, "carrying the culture through the streets." Anybody who grew up African American and dancing in South Philly would agree. "Famous" people from our neighborhood are known nationally and internationally (just think of Marian Anderson, Judith Jamison, and Chubby Checker, for a start—and the list goes on) but they came from somewhere. South Philly's famous singers and dancers were schooled in folk arts and rooted in expressive traditions—which many more of us have shared. Great artists had many peers against which they modeled their art and from whom they drew inspiration—but all these others remain little known.

It was at cabarets, after-hour clubs, jook joints, social clubs, entertainment bars (and the shout floors at some churches) that people came together to dance and move. African American institutions in our community brought together and sustained an exceptionally wide range of dancers and dance styles. African dancers from the continent, school-trained dancers, community-trained dancers, folks from other neighborhoods of South Philly and from North Philly, West Philly, all with their distinct styles—all mixed, mingled, borrowed, observed, appropriated and traditionalized elements of one another's styles and movements. Dance styles that seem to persist over generations represent creative (and often consciously Afrocentric) choices by people over time, illustrating what scholars Gerald Davis, John Roberts, Richard Price and Sidney Mintz and others have referred to both as an underlying aesthetic and as an historical process.

"From Hucklebuck to Hip-Hop" is a project to document African American social dance and to present great dancers to the community. Starting last spring, we created a series of three community concerts in the historic Christian Street "Y"—one dance for the 1940s and '50s, one for the '60s and '70s and one for the '80s and '90s. We're planning more dances this year, along with a book about our dance traditions by scholars John Roberts and Katrina Hazzard. (See excerpts that follow.) Please let us know about your own dance history and join us at the next dances. Special thanks to all of the committee

members (and especially Carole Smith), volunteers, dancers, musicians and friends who helped in many ways. Thanks also to the National Endowment for the Arts-Folk Arts Program, Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Community Folklife Program, the Philadelphia Folklore Project, Gerald Davis and John Robert.

—Lois Fernandez and Debora Kodish

Doing the Philly Dog.
Photo: Thomas B. Morton, 1994

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Tell us how you dance. . .

Here are some things we'd like to know about your own place in dance history:

- Did you grow up in Philadelphia? If so, in which part of the city and which neighborhood?
- Did you spend much time dancing when you were growing up? How about when you got older? Why was dancing important to you?
- Where did you dance as a teenager? (house or block parties, recreation centers, candy stores or soda shops, school or church dances, etc.?) When was this?
- Where did you dance when you were "of age"? (dance halls/ballrooms, discos, bars, nightclubs, after-hours places, cabarets, private/membership clubs, house parties, speakeasies. . .)
- What sort of music was played at different dance places? Was it live or recorded? Was there a deejay?
- What were your favorite places to dance? Why did you like them?
- Where would you go to dance when you really wanted to let loose? When you wanted to spend a romantic evening dancing?
- What dances do you remember doing? Did you have favorite dances? Why did you like them?
- How did you learn to dance? Did your parents like to dance? Did you dance at home?
- Were there differences in the dancing from one part of the city to the next? What sorts of differences could you notice? Which neighborhoods had the best dancers?
- Do you remember any great dancers from your neighborhood? What made them good? Did you have a favorite or regular dance partner?
- Have you ever gotten into a competition or challenge on the dance floor? How did that happen?
- Would you be willing to talk with someone further? Can you recommend others with whom we should talk? Send written responses— or call us: ODUNDE, PO Box 21748, Phila., PA 19146 (215) 732-8508 Thanks!

ODUNDE plans to hold more "From Hucklebuck to Hip-Hop" dances this fall (with contests for all you great dancers out there), and to publish a commemorative book. To get the details, be sure to call ODUNDE: (215) 732-8508. The essays and excerpts on these pages provide a glimpse into this ongoing project.

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I don't ever remember a time when we didn't dance: excerpts from interviews

Joyce Allen and Howard Jordan cha-cha.
Photo: Thomas B. Morton, 1994

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Over the last four months, Hayley Thomas and I have sought out people who have always loved to dance, and asked them to reflect on their own personal histories of African American dance—especially dance in South Philadelphia. Starting with some of those who attended the popular "Hucklebuck to Hip-Hop" dance parties sponsored by ODUNDE this past spring, we have interviewed more than 50 people and heard about the bop, the slop, the shingaling, the butterfly and the Philly dog—among other dances. People have recalled places they once danced and hung out, including ballrooms, bars, discos, corner stores, speakeasies and nightclubs, church and school dances, house parties (rent parties, selling parties, pay parties, waistline parties, dollar parties), block or street parties, and cabarets. Many local dance shows—The Mitch Thomas Show, but also Steel Pier, Step This Way, and Dancing On Air—were acknowledged as sources of inspiration and showcases for exceptional dancers, while Bandstand was widely denounced for its exclusion of Black dancers. Most people remembered their dancing days with great fondness and nostalgia.

The following "conversation"—woven together from the threads of many interviews—echoes the stories, memories, opinions, and experiences people have shared. In reading these excerpts, you can be reminded of the prestigious reputation of Philadelphia dancers and how dancing varied from one neighborhood to the next. People discuss practicing and performing, innovation and flair. They reflect on favorite partners and outstanding dancers, and savor the pleasures of competitions and challenges. They consider what dancing meant to them and how it fits into their lives. We invite you to share your own recollections. We would be pleased to hear from you.

—Jennifer Michael

You could tell where people were from by the way they danced:

Any place else that you went, they knew that you were from Philly by your dancing. You went to Washington, North Virginia, they knew you were from Philly.... And, gosh, it was like being the President! If you were somewhere else and they knew you were from Philly—Oh! you were a celebrity! The guys wouldn't take too kindly to you. But the girls—oh, my gosh! The girls, oh, they were all over you. They were all over you like a cheap suit! You had a ball. They could tell you were from Philly. Like I said, the fellows weren't too happy about it, but the girls—oh, gosh, yes indeed!—Garrie Seibert, age 52, from Tioga/Germantown

I will tell you one thing: you could tell what section of the city a person was from by how they did some of the dances. And as a matter of fact... I'm dancing with a guy and we're doin' the bop, and he said, "You're from North Philly, ain't ya? I could tell the North Philly boppers, 'cause they don't do it like we do it from West Philly."—Yvonne Jackson, age 43, from North Philadelphia

South Philly had the best bop dancers. No one could outdance us! —Virginia Robichaw, age 55, from South Philadelphia

In West Philly, they were more conservative with the bop; they did it a little smoother. They was what they call cool. North Philly, they danced. They did the bop, they danced. They wasn't tryin' to be cute, hold back or nothin'....That's where your good dancers come from: North Philly.—Claudia Hall, age 49, from North Philadelphia

Girls from South Philly dance different from any other girls. Yes, they do! I'm tellin' ya. They all danced different. Girls from North Philly had their dance, but the South Philadelphia was the dancer. She was the dancer. Germantown, good dancers. North Philly had good dancers. But South

Philadelphia girls—best dancers I've ever seen!—Gus Lacy, from West Philadelphia

The North Philly guys wore their hats pulled down, cocked to the side of the head. And the boys down here, they...wore a Jefferson; they wore 'em straight. And you could always tell the way they would dance: the North Philly boys kept their hands in their pockets, in their pants, and they pulled the pants up on one side. And the South Philly boys didn't do that. They danced with their hands loose–never had their hands in their pockets. Never!—Virginia Robichaw, age 55, from South Philadelphia

Well, during the slop, that was it: You put your hands in your pockets to pull your pants up so they would not be in your way, because you were wearing bellbottoms. So you did not want them to drag while you were doing your steps or get your foot caught in the cuff. And it was part of it. See, everybody else would dance with their hands out, but you would put your hands in your pocket and pull 'em up, 'cause it would also give you a sense of style.—Garrie Seibert, age 52, from Tioga/Germantown

There was a whole culture went along with this thing....

After a while in North Philly, you knew who was who. But if you went to another community, that's when.... competition kicked in. You go to another community and you dance better than anybody here.... But if you really go, guys would get jealous, because the girls would start liking you. Well, the girls in other communities like the guys from out of the community anyway, that's how that went....They were takin' the beef, yeah. They call it "cattle rustlers."—John Wilkie, age 53, and Dottie Wilkie, age 49, from North Philadelphia

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Twisting at "From Hucklebuck to Hip-Hop." Photo: Thomas B. Morton, 1994

Generally speaking, you went into a certain area, you knew you had to respect the guys in the area. Sometimes we'd have to box the guys in the area just to get to a social. Because they wanted to make sure you weren't punks. And so that was called "checkin' your heart." And so, even on the way to the dances, somebody might try and check your heart, as it was called. And then, the boxing thing that would ensue would be called "a fair one".... You'd fight one guy, and if you out-boxed him or he respected the way you boxed, then you were okay. So there was a whole culture that went along with this thing.—Anton Witherspoon, age 40, from West Philadelphia

You'd get together and practice....

We'd practice after school, after homework, practice in between basketball, whatever else we did. We had a place where we'd come and practice our music. Always somebody's mother's living room....You want to be in the living room, because that way you get people coming in and criticizing you. You weren't in the basement where you couldn't be seen. So we'd practice upstairs where other kids'd be looking in your window: "Oh he's good!" "So-and-so and can't dance!"—Anton Witherspoon, age 40, from West Philadelphia

With the bop and the cha-cha, you'd get together and practice, and then you'd learn steps, and then you'd call out the steps, so that when...three girlfriends and their partners would dance, you'd call out a step and it would really look sharp, almost like a line dance.—Norma Smith, age 53, from Swarthmore

They had this dance called the continental, and we used to come home from school, do your homework, and then go work on different continentals, different routines.... . And if you weren't doin' your homework, the whole line would go this way, you would go that way, and everybody would laugh at you!—John Wilkie, age 53, from North Philadelphia

I can remember that that's all we would do: we would come home from school and practice dancing.... with the girls. All the girls would practice, so we would be ready for these guys when the dances came up.—Donna Brown, age 50, from South Philadelphia

You know, it was a time girls danced together. There was nothin' said. But now it's stopped.—Clara Clark, age 77, from Swarthmore

If you were a good dancer you had a place in the community.... .

All good dancers are a little bit egotistic. If you happen to be dancing next to somebody who's a good dancer, they want to show you up and you want to show them up. Or let me put it another way: it's not so much that you want to show up the other person, but it's just that you don't want to look like you're coming in second.... All of a sudden you'll see two people dancing, and the next thing you know, you've got a competition going. Without anybody announcing that it's a competition. But you know that there's a competition, because the dancing becomes more intense. And people start pulling out all their tricks.—Louis Porter, age 42, from North Philadelphia

Certain dancers, even if you were good, you did not go out there and jump on the floor with them....You did not want to dance next to him. Because....what he'd do to the girl we call "squirrel her." That means show her up, that he was better. And you standin' next to him and he's doin' these fantastic steps.... they're all looking at him, you feel a little embarrassed. You wouldn't dance over there where he was dancing, you'd dance over here!—Garrie Seibert, age 52, from Tioga/Germantown

No one in the area would ever want to challenge [us]. They see us comin' to a party, you see the floor. You see people start openin' the floor. And that's the way you got respect. Whether you had money, whether you were smart, no matter what. If you were a good dancer, you had a place in the community.—Anton Witherspoon, age 40, from West Philadelphia

People that bopped would dance in the middle of the floor, and the people that would strand would go around the outside. And when you'd be dancin', in goin' around the floor you could very well see just about everybody that was there. And different corners–and you knew where the dancers were. When you got in that corner, you'd do a little extra step to let 'em know that you was in contention, too. And then when they come around, maybe they might do a little extra step.—Otis Gibens, age 56, from South Philadelphia

You'd see dancers that were unbelievable....

There was always one person or two people from an area who were considered to be the best dancers. And if they showed up at the party, the competition was on....We'd be at the party. The really good dancer would just sort of come in and at first just kind of look around—not dance—watch it, see who was the best dancer. After one or two, maybe three dances, they'd get out and start dancing. They wouldn't do all their steps, they'd just do a few, just to get the notice of everyone. That would then spark all the other couples who were really good dancers, and at a certain point, only those couples would be on the floor. And I tell you, it would be incredible. I mean, you'd see dancers that were unbelievable.—Mo Brooker, age 54, from South Philadelphia

There was this guy in North Philly called Cha-Cha Larry. And, well, there's supposed to be more than one Cha-Cha Larry—that's how funky Cha-Cha Larry was. And it's like, you don't know which person is the real Cha-Cha Larry. But Cha-Cha Larry—You would see Cha-Cha Larry at different places, not knowin' if it was the same Cha-Cha Larry you saw. But this dude was bad! He was bad! It was like this person was flyin'! He was levitatin', he was movin' so fast! Oh, he was the stuff!—Homer Jackson, age 37, from North Philadelphia

Every week.... George [Gray] would be on Mitch Thomas.... and George would do this thing called the Walk.... And George, he was a master at that.—John Wilkie, age 53, from North Philadelphia

Clano Bryan ....was an exceptional dancer, and he created a lot of spins and turns from the so-called cha-cha dance ....And he was so good at that, that all the fellows–all the boys and girls–copied off of him. And when you see variations of the cha-cha now, you see his steps.—Jim Justice, age 58, from North Philadelphia

Carla Dorsey and James Sultan dancing at Hucklebuck to Hip Hop. Photos: Thomas B. Morton, 1994

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Richard [Mack] was a very tall young man who loved to dance .... And he was inventive, because he always embellished the dance and converted it to his own style. I mean, that was the signature: if you were a really good dancer, it wasn't a question that you could do the dance, but you converted that dance to your style, and you put steps in that no one else had.—Mo Brooker, age 54, from South Philadelphia

That's what we're going for

Guys went out dancing, girls thought guys were looking for girls.... And if they knew dancers, they'd know girls were the last thing—We're showin' off! The point is, we're going to show off. That's what we're going for. We're going to make people look bad. That's what we're going for. We're going to let them know .... "We cuttin' up tonight! We out killin'! We slayin' tonight! Come and get some!" That was the attitude. It wasn't girls.—Anton Witherspoon, age 40, from West Philadelphia

The slow dancing was always like the crème de la crème of the dances, at least for boys, 'cause that was always the time when you got to hold the girls close to you.—Corbitt Banks, age 51, from South Philadelphia

[Your favorite dance partner] would change for the different type dances.... There were several guys in the neighborhood that were the only guys that could really strand....When it was time to strand, naturally you would want to dance with one of them. And.... there were a lot of guys that did the bop very well, so if you wanted to bop, you would bop with them. So you had different guys for different dances.—Mary Chantey Richardson, age 56, from South Philadelphia

I never really dated a lot of girls. I had dance partners, because I could not stand to go on the dance floor with somebody who could not dance. It would just drive me crazy! .... I'd go out, and I would watch girls dance. I would watch every girl in the house dance. And then I would decide whether I thought somebody was good enough to dance with me, and that's the girl I wanted to know. I wanted to know her not because I liked her, but I liked her dance. Her dance was totally separate from her.—Anton Witherspoon, age 40, from West Philadelphia

Sometime we'd get a guy and dance him to death if he's a good dancer.... There'd be a line tryin' to get to him. Yeah. I used to love that.... That's the fun of it: cuttin' in.—Thelma Paris, age 61, from South Philadelphia

Dancing should always be a good thing, 'cause it's...something good. It's something that makes you laugh and feel good inside.... When I'm upset or frustrated, the first thing I'll think of, I'll call a friend and say "Let's go dancing."—Tonya Dixon, age 25, from South Philadelphia

I don't ever remember a time when we didn't dance. I mean, even as babies—When all the family members got together and had affairs and celebrations and events—family events—there was dancing. Little kids always danced like they do today, so it was always so much a part of our lifestyle.—Corbitt Banks, age 51, from South Philadelphia

I just love to dance. I think if I leave the Earth, they have to take my shoes off so I won't click 'em together!—Claudia Hall, age 49, from North Philadelphia

McHARRIS and DOLORES

"MEMPHIS BOUND"

Clockwise, from below: poster from the Apollo Theater (Libby Spencer, fourth from left, in front line), a "lobby" of Delores and Dave McHarris., Isabelle Fambro (Eleanor) and Billy Byrd, with her sister Claudine at the 2-Bit Club in the mid-1950s.

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Remember Berenice Lacy? Berenice Lacy was on Kiddie Hour [about 1933-34], she was another tap dancer.... But they had alot of—they had quite a few female tap dancers. You remember, I told you in them days there was alot of female tap dancers that never got that recognition because they wasn't, you know, aggressive as the male.—LaVaughn Robinson

And then I met another young lady that was a good dancer—Juanita Pitts. See, Juanita Pitts used to come through Philadelphia and she would always stop at the Two Bit Club, 16th and Fitzwater. And anytime she came through there, she had a job. Do you understand what I'm saying? And regardless to who the dancers was, if she came through and wanted to work.... she was always welcome to dance at the Two Bit Club—LaVaughn Robinson

When I first saw Louise Madison dance, I didn't think there was nobody like that dancin'. This was—I must have been about fourteen years old, dancin' on the street.... buskin'. And I met this guy called Lawrence Patterson—Sy. He used to work with an act called "Popcorn, Peanuts and Cracker Jack." He told us one day, he says—there was three of us then—He says, "I'm going to take you all to Jersey so you can see somebody tap dance." I said, "OK." He had a little old beat-up car. And he took us to the Cotton Club, in Lawnside, New Jersey. And he set us in the back of the club and he told Ted, "Give them a little drink, and ginger ale and put a cherry in it and make it look like a drink," you know. And this lady came out on the stage and and did so much dancing, in white tails, that it was unbelievable. Now, she was one of the first female dancers that did a solo with low-heeled shoes..... Well, she had shoes on just like a man would wear.... .but then I had the pleasure of working with her in the Apollo Theater with Boyd Rayburn's band and Maynard Ferguson and Ella Fitzgerald. And man, she was doing so much dancing. But you know what I never could understand—why she never did make it like she should have. —LaVaughn Robinson
You know why? Her looks. That's what stopped her.—Dave McHarris

Women danced in the line but they never did get any kind of recognition, you know. Like oh, if they was dancers, the producers may tell 'em, why don't you do me a routine or something like that..... All my steps, I'd never write anything down. Like alot of them would write steps down. I would never write nothing down..... I was the first Black woman to put a line in the Paramount on Broadway but they did not give me the credit. They didn't give me the credit.... June Taylor Dancers and Jackie Gleason, that's who they said. But I was the first Black to put a line.... .Well, you know, just that's the way it was. That's just the way it was.—Hortense Allen Jordan

Regularly, we'd do three shows a day, but with the big bands we'd go into six and seven shows a day. [We didn't get paid more.] Sure, we always thought it was wrong, especially me. Oh yes, sure did. I was always the first one to say something and would strike. Listen, I started a strike there and at Small's. I did. But it's hard getting people to follow you. They'll say they'll follow you and then they won't. But I ended up getting a raise and they didn't. And they didn't speak up. "Well, who's dissatisfied in here? No one opened up their mouth but me. So I was the only one got the raise.... . I said, "He's not going to give it to you because you won't—didn't speak up and that was really dirty of you to leave me standing by myself, when I was speaking up for all of you. But see, that's not going to stop me because I wasn't only speaking up for you. I was speaking up for myself."

[That was over] more money. You know. And Small's should have been more money anyway. You don't get anything if you don't ask.... . It was the same thing over here in New Jersey. Just tell him we're not going to work. Just walk out.... .They did it, and he gave them the raise. He knew it was me. You know. Well, I didn't care because it was—I knew it was right. I wasn't doing anything that was wrong. Like I say, you're never going to get anything if you don't ask for it.

And we deserved it. The salary was small enough as it was, you know. You see all the people jammed in the place, you know. Goodness. And he was bragging himself, you know, "My goodness, we never had it so good. You know, "where did all these people come from?" Him and his wife. He wouldn't offer you another dime. Wouldn't think of it. I didn't find it any problem to ask for what I thought was right. "—Libby Spencer

[About women not getting the chances or credit], I didn't let it get to me but I knew it was happening all along. If I can't—If I don't see a way of doing something about something, I can't worry about it. See, I can't spend my time and energy worrying about that. Because that can only hurt me, see, it can't hurt anyone else. Now, if I see where I can do something about it, then I won't have to worry about it. I'll do something about it. But when I see I'm by myself and I don't have anyone to back me up or to go into it with me, there's no need. Just leave it alone.... And you make yourself happy with something else that is positive.—Libby Spencer

Edith Hunt performed as a child as "Baby Edwards," and as part of the girl and boy act "Spic and Span." Dee McHarris performed with her husband Dave as "Dave and Dee," and "McHarris and Delores." Isabelle Fambro performed with her partner as "Billy and Eleanor Byrd." Her agent thought that Marge and Gower Champion were what people wanted, so he created a name and image that suggested an elegant married couple—and Isabelle Fambro became Eleanor Byrd: "So that's how that come about. It didn't matter [what we were called]. It didn't matter. What was in a name? Look, there was Scoop and Doop and everything, and Spic and Span and Tip Tap Toe. There was names. People just used names. Slim and Slam.... .and all those type of names. They weren't no real names. They just wasn't real names. The Ink Spots. Who knew who they were? Other than whatever name they called themselves.—Isabelle Fambro

Hortense Allen got a name from another dancer. "Yeah, they called me "the Body." I used to think I was a corpse!.... I got the name "the Body" through Peg Leg Bates. So, the majority of exotic dancers, they have the name "Princess So-and-So and So-and-So." I said, "No, my name is Hortense, and I ain't no Princess So and So. Now, they just coming to see an act. So Peg Leg Bates started calling me, said "Be Hortense 'the Body' Allen. So I picked up the name.—Hortense Allen

Mildred "Candi" Thorpe performed with Jewel Welch as "Candi and Pepper"— an act that was unusual in presenting two women together. The duo altered standard conventions in the clothes they wore, as well: "[The M.C. at the Apollo used to say, introducing us] 'Ladies and gentlemen, we've got an act for you out of Philadelphia. The name is Candi and Pepper, he says—Candi is sweet, Pepper's hot, come on girls and show us what you've got.' And boom we went out there. And that's what I mean—we showed 'em what we had. They'd never seen two girls. And we were young, we were young. We never exposed any part of our body other than our face and our hands.... .Our costumes were zoot suits—shirts and ties. We used to wear the Windsor knot—big, big knot. And that alone—people....wanted to see flesh. And for us to go into the Apollo and to score like we did is just amazing. And that was it, We never exposed our body. Never."—Mildred "Candi" Thorpe

Women's looks—and their color—made a difference in the kind of work available to them as dancers. "You couldn't be but so brown. It was like you couldn't be but so brown. Dark brown-skinned girls were, they were out. Brown skinned and light, that was the thing, you know, lighter complexion, that was the thing. That was true mostly everyplace.... [Memphis Bound, Bill Robinson's show] was one of the first shows that was broken down. Well, the producer, the man that had the money, he broke it

down, because he wanted who he picked in his line, [and she] was the darkest brown skinned girl.... .and girls had to learn that it had nothing to do with color, it was talent. So.... . . It's like anything else, you had to be in. And if you're in, you can get by. And Louis Armstrong's wife, they used to call her Brown Sugar, she was in the Cotton Club and she was a dark-skinned girl...."—Libby Spencer

Lillian Fitzgerald put iodine on her face to look brown and Isabelle Fambro used a different shade of Max Factor on her hands, arms, and face to make herself lighter. Others never got a chance. "Clarence Robinson used to produce for the Cotton Club back in those days and the Zanzibar.... . .The majority of times, Clarence Robinson would use like the lighter girls. You had to look either like a Indian or foreigner or Mexican before he would use you. Now, Clarence Robinson, had a girl, they said, named Ristina Banks, used to choreograph his shows, cause Clarence couldn't dance. And used to choreograph his shows, teach the girls, you know. But she couldn't dance in the line because she was a brown-skinned girl. They never would use her, they say. I never met her, but they say she was a terrific dancer. —Hortense Allen Jordan

"Well, you know what I always thought? Chorus girls was a throwaway.... that's what I called them. What they called a throwaway, they come and do an act. They don't give them the applause—very seldom you saw chorus girls unless you was a soubrette that got applause. And they opened, in black clubs they would do a middle number which was their very best, their very best. And most of their middle numbers they did for the oncoming act to follow them. So that's why the name throwaways come in. Plus they never got a salary like a performer. Never did. They got scale. Or if they were a little above scale, they get maybe ten or fifteen dollars more. But they never got up in the hundreds unless they were in some huge big show. Now the chorus girls—like Larry Steele.... they were his show. Because of their costumes and at that time, a little bit of nudity and they were pretty. And they got paid for their beauty, their figure, and not so much as their dances. Because I know they had showgirls that couldn't do a—couldn't cut a step. But then they made the show and they made it a beautiful show."—Isabelle Fambro

The story of chorus girls is the real untold story, really.... Because they would have you to think that the acts did it, because the acts did not carry the show, it was the chorus girls that carried the show. And that's really who people used to come to the Apollo to see—what the chorus girls was going to do the next week, because we had to change every week, three numbers. That's right. And we were very good, I must say. You know, we were very good. We didn't think we were very good at the time, but looking back at it, we did a lot of stuff.... . .We didn't want to create an act. We wanted to be chorus girls....because we did more, we learned more, we knew more. An act didn't know anything but their act.... You'd have to know more....but we were not qualified, we were not looked upon as better than the acts. Because they were acts and we were chorus girls, so we're the little, you know, low on the totem pole. But many of the girls in the chorus had more talent than an act. Well, that's true. But the acts that were good, they were excellent, you know, they had to be....—Libby Spencer

If you ever was a chorus girl, you learned all kinds of dancing. But if you had an act, you only do that act until you retire. See, well, in St. Louis, we had to change shows every two weeks and had to do five numbers. So, a lot of people will come out of school and say, "I'm a dancer" but their brain don't function that well to learn all five of those numbers and have to change them. That's the difference.... . Some of em say, "Well, this is my technique," but that's the only kind they have learned, one style or one kind of dancing. Just like Dunham—the only one style or one kind of dancing."—Hortense Allen Jordan

For the "tall girls" in the Apollo line, the boundaries between acts and chorus were blurred. Libby Spencer danced as captain of the line at the Apollo. "We always liked whatever acts came in. We'd stand in the wings and watch and learn different things from them, you know. What they were doing.... Mr. Harper used to make us go down and learn from different acts that came in, some of their steps, and then he would put it in our routines. Different [acts] would teach the tall girls."—Libby Spencer

The performers themselves appreciated the chorus girls because they wouldn't dare want to come in the Apollo without 'em, you know, because they knew what they meant to them as acts. We would come on, open up a show, that would open it up for the warmth of it, and then the different acts in between and then we would do a middle number. And then the rest of the acts would come on. And then we'd do a big finale.... You had a tap dancing group or duo, like "Spic and Span", or "Billy and Eleanor Byrd". Then you had a blues singer. You had a pop singer, a comedian, and you had little acts in between. You know, they would do little different acts.... Shake dancer, they would call 'em, interpretive dancer. You would have an act like the Nicholas Brothers. They would be the act before the finale. The big act would be the act before the finale. It was always set up like that. —Libby Spencer

The chorus—it was fun. We were like sisters, we helped one another. Life was really fun. We looked forward to coming to work because we really liked one another, you know. Just learned different routines—those that wasn't, that didn't pick up on the routines as fast as the others someone else would help them, you know, to make sure that they learned it so they could be able to work, because if you didn't learn the steps, you was out. And one moment, the producer would not, you know, they weren't..... they would not put up with you not knowing. See, you had to know how to dance when you came to the Apollo. But some girls was slower learning. It's not that they couldn't dance, but everybody don't pick up as fast as the other. So then we would get them aside and make sure—and drill them, and make sure that they would get in.... Because the girsl that came from the Cotton Club, when the Cotton Club closed and they came to the Apollo, they were not very good dancers. See, the girls at the Apollo was very good dancers. And the Cotton Club girls were—very pretty, and you know, and they were looked up to. So they wanted to come in the Apollo. But they just couldn't learn those routines. So I would take a couple of them.... that made it through. But like I said, Leonard Harper, he didn't stand for you not knowing. He said, "you're a professional, you're supposed to come in and learn and get it", you know. So that was that. —Libby Spencer

What happened at the end of our act is, we were booked in the mountains.... Emersons up in the Catskills and the agent from [Japan] came over to see us. And my son was sick. He had TB as a little boy. And he liked the act. So this time we was in the agent's in NY, we had left Jolly [Joyce].... we went with the Morris Agency and I mean we were booked with the biggest of acts and the biggest of stars.... we were the dance team....And they came in here, and they bought the act and I kept telling Billy, "I don't want to go to no Japan, I want to stay close to home" because Sonny [her son] was sick. And he got disturbed about that, and he hadn't been to Japan and he wanted to go. So he rehearsed another girl. I knew her, Vivian. Out of New York. And he didn't let me know that he was passing Vivian off as "Billy and Eleanor." Now I'm brown and she was fair. Plus she didn't work like me 'cause she danced up on her toes, but she could tap. That was a good novelty act. And he went on to Japan and when he got there, after a few shows, I don't know how many, whatever, the agent came into the club and he says, "this is not the act that I booked." And he was very disturbed about it. So they cancelled him. First time, ever, in the history of show business, was he cancelled. So he got very disturbed at me, and very angry at me.... For not going. For not going. And it was good money.... I wasn't going to Japan. Suppose something happened to Sonny and I was in Japan?—Isabelle Fambro

I left show business after Billy and I split.... See, it was double salary with us. And naturally, when he went on with the Ink Spots, and I'm only doing two nights a week, I couldn't make it. And the War then was over and I wasn't getting the check, and I went to work for the City. My first cousin, which we were raised as brothers and sisters was a [PA state] Senator. So I went to Freeman, Free-

Other page: A composite of photos of Isabelle Fambro (Eleanor Byrd) at the Earle Theater

Left: Libby Spencer

man Hankins. And I told him I needed a job. And he said what can you do, and I said, "Sing and dance." At that particular time, "Act," whatever. So, he says, "How 'bout clerical work?" I said, "Whatever you get me, if I don't know it, I'll learn it." So he got me a job with the City.... But I would work Friday and Saturday, still doing my show business.... And I started living—without the help of Billy, without the help of anybody. Except—I owed Freeman my life.—Isabelle Fambro

This year, Marshall and Jean Stearns' book *Jazz Dance*, long out of print, was republished, with a new foreword and afterword by Brenda Bufalino, a New York hoofer and former protege of Honi Coles. Bufalino, through her teaching, performing and choreography, has become a nationally and internationally recognized exponent of tap's artistic complexity and richness and an advocate of tap's claiming a place on the concert stage (vernacular no longer). She writes that the Stearns' book has become "the Bible for the new generation of tap dancers and a reference manual for the tap masters still living who worked so diligently to pass on the tradition as well as the technique." (xi-xii)

The republication of *Jazz Dance* is a graphic reminder that even some of the most thorough and thoughtful researchers have tended to discount the participation of African American women in the development and popularizing of the tap form. Stearns and Stearns mention "excellent tap dancer" Mae Barne who was quoted as insisting that "a few of us chorus girls knew more flashy steps than the dance directors or choreographers." They also mention Katie Carter, Muriel Ringold, Cotton Club dancer Cora LaRedd, Maud Mills ("nicknamed 'Hardfoot Maud' because she hit the deck with such force"), Alice Whitman (who "was tops," had "clean, clear taps," and "could cut a five-tap wing like a man"), and Etta Gross who was "as good as Alice Whitman," Florence Covan (wife of Willie), Bessie Dudley, Jodie Edwards (of Butterbeans and Susie), "excellent woman tapper" Lavinia Mack and "eccentric dancer" Ada Overton, George Walker's wife.* Their references to a dozen black women only scratched the surface.**

While the underrecognition of African American women in *Jazz Dance* might be explained by the premature arrest of the Stearns' research due to Marshall's death in 1966, it is harder to understand why it is that through the 1970s, the 1980s, and up to today, veteran black female hoofers—now in their late 60s to early 80s—have remained overwhelmingly in obscurity while the careers of numerous black male dancers have been revitalized, sustained, and even transformed*** by the performance, teaching and grant opportunities spawned by the so-calld tap "revival." The "Women's Movement" notwithstanding, veteran African American women hoofers are still waiting for the phone to ring while their male counterparts have been appearing and performing in film (e.g. Tap, No Maps on My Taps), on Broadway (Black and Blue, My One and Only), at prestigious venues in the U.S. and abroad (Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, Kennedy Center, the Smithsonian Institution, the 1990 Dance Biennale in Lyon, France) and in a growing array of tap festivals.

Reflective of the way that African American women have been overlooked and denied recognition for their contribution to developing and sustaining the tradition of tap dancing is an essay entitled "Super Moms of Tap" which appeared two years ago in the dance periodical *Attitude*, as well as in a publication of the International Tap Association. The essay's author, Katherine Kramer, described how a community of women—primarily white, middle-class, college-educated and forty-something—supported, promoted, and encouraged the revival of the careers of a community of veteran tap dancers—primarily black, male, unlettered and 60-80-something. The "Super Moms," according to Kramer, were the resuscitators and caretakers of a "waning" art form; the vehicle for their restorative power was the nurturance and inspiration they provided the male dancers who became their "lovers....fathers, brothers, storytellers and friends." Kramer urged that it was time for her and the other "Moms" to abandon their self-sacrificing handmaiden roles and concentrate on developing their own prominence as tap performers and choreographers. Had Kramer taken a longer historical perspective on her topic, she might have recognized that there were many African American women who, like her male idols, distinguished themselves as performers and stylistic innovators. She also might have acknowledged that long before her generation of tap disciples entered the fold, there were African American women dancers who struggled against anonymity, discrimination, and exploitation, and who sacrificed personal career goals for the sake of the children and men in their lives. This article is an introduction to just a few of those women.

—Germaine Ingram and Debora Kodish

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Edith Hunt: dancing as "Spic and Span," far left and as "Baby Edwards."

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The African American dancers quoted in these pages describe color lines and segregation, exploitative bosses and family needs, organizing and persevering, the patterns of a rough work day and being taken for granted, the constraints of narrow images of women, and ways that they overcame. And that's just for a start. This is the second PFP newsletter article on tap, presenting some more brief stories and comments—fragments from ongoing conversations and interviews with artists participating in the Philadelphia Tap Initiative: Isabelle Fambro, Edith "Baby Edwards" Hunt, Hortense Allen Jordan, Dave and Dee McHarris, Henry Meadows, LaVaughn Robinson, Libby Spencer, and Mildred "Candi" Thorpe. Sometime next spring, we hope that you'll join us at a performance by these same artists and others. Watch for details. The Philadelphia Tap Initiative is directed by Germaine Ingram, with the support of the National Endowment for the Arts-Folk Arts Program, the Lila Wallace Readers' Digest Community Folklife Program, The Pew Charitable Trusts, and the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts. Thanks to all.

Jazz Dance was initially published in 1968, two years after Marshall Steams' untimely death. (See pp. 122, 145, and 195 for references to the women cited here.

**In 1990, Rusty Frank's *TAP!* was published, listing nearly 20 African American women tappers. Cheryl Willis' 1991 dissertation at Temple, *Tap Dance*, lists more than 80 African American women hoofers.

***Some performers whose original acts involved comedic or eccentric dancing reinvented themselves as tap dancers when hoofing found a new audience.

African Dance in Philadelphia

In the African American community, people hold a wide (and conflicting) range of opinions about "what African dance really is." Documenting some of the dance groups active locally is a first step in exploring some of our own dance history.

Within the community, it is often said that various camps of African dance in Phila are "better" than others. This evaluation often reflects the speaker's understanding of what is "authentic." Authenticity is often understood in relation to such things as the background, training or identity of the teacher/dancer, the rhythms used, costumes worn, and dance movements and styles presented. Direct contact (of varying kinds and degrees) with Africa, or a dancer's years of commitment to the tradition may also affect peoples' claims of (or judgements about) authenticity.

On the other hand, outside the community (for example, among mainstream funders and presenters of dance), dance judged to be "good" is more likely to be evaluated in terms of more formal or external features. For most conventional "art world" critics, the relationship between any individual dancer or dance ensemble and any heritage or tradition remains largely unacknowledged and invisible. Yet it is exactly this relationship—and theories of authenticity and descent—that guide still other scholarly perspectives which consider that African dance in Philadelphia is not "real" African dance.

People may make different judgements in relation to whether they believe someone is African, African American, African Caribbean, African European, school-trained, or associated with one particular teacher or another. Do any of these backgrounds make an individual better qualified to teach and/or perform African dance? What if an artist is teaching the sum total of their own artistic and creative synthesis—and that synthesis is distinctly Afrocentric? All judgements come with their own values.

Even the term "African dance" can mean many different things. For one thing, wearing African garb and performing African dance often reflects a positive and gratifying political, social-historical, cultural, and psychological choice on the part of an individual. And in Philadelphia, it is clear that we have been making these choices and developing our own traditions of African dance for generations. Some vernacular dance traditions have historically preserved and extended African dance without calling it such (and so, in the citations that follow, you will find examples of stepping and street dance). Some drummers are included in these citations, for music and dance have continued to be inseparable, and developments in one form have influenced the other. As well, you will find some examples of artists who were active in the Black dance movement, which provided an avenue for synthesizing and understanding some varieties of dance performed by African Americans. A whole tradition of explicitly-named and self-consciously developed "African" dance has also evolved here, and the bulk of the citations listed here represent groups and individuals who have been in the mainstream of this tradition.

We can distinguish two main types of dance orientations among the groups described below. Some artists, in their different ways, combine research in African diaspora dance with a love for modern and/or ballet technique; theirs can be called a stage orientation, and it typically has a focus on excellence in presentation and professionalism.

In contrast, artists with a community orientation are perhaps less documented in the written record but well known to the community. These artists likewise may represent a synthesis of forms, but stress the everyday uses of dance and drum, the significance of dance for the individual and community, and the participatory context.

While the stage and community traditions may seem to reflect different orientations to audiences, different preferred settings for dance, and different contexts and networks, in fact, these different approaches have intermixed and mingled over the last thirty years. Community-oriented dancers in particular have tended to perform across the spectrum, maintaining a connection to community, and performing in festivals, celebrations and observances, as well as in theaters. The existence of many different artists and companies working in different settings have influenced subsequent generations of dancers, and contributed to the vitality of Philadelphia African American dance.

The entries that follow are very brief excerpts (as is this esay) from a larger working paper just available from the Folklore Project. These efforts are a beginning attempt to trace some of the ways in which African dance is evolving here. We invite and welcome your comments (call us at 238-0096) and especially we request any information about dancers and dance groups of which we are unaware. In closing, I want to say to the African American arts community that we are strongest when we are all together. As my friend Chuck Davis says, "Peace, love and respect to everybody."

—Benita Binta Brown

African Art in Motion was founded in 1986 as Kofi Asante and Company to continue the work of Arthur Hall. The current company is made up of veteran artists, each of whom brings at least 15 years experience in dance and drumming. African Art in Motion performs dances of celebration, chiefly from Ghana and Nigeria. The signature piece of the ensemble is called "Okom," a dance from the Ga people of Ghana. Asante is also committed to bringing artists together in various ways. Contact: Kofi Asante, Director, African Art in Motion, 3700 Chestnut Street, Phila., PA 19104. 662-9739

The African Cultural Ambassadors formed in February of 1993 chiefly to promote and sustain Liberian culture in Philadelphia. Most of the group's dancers were trained in Liberia as members of the Liberian National Cultural Troupe; they come from a range of Liberian

Arthur Hall and his original ensemble, c. 1970s. Photo: Thomas B. Morton

ethnic groups. Performances within and outside the Liberian community include Larma, Bassa, Gio, Mandingo, Ruma, Du and Sande dances. Contact: Dominique Zayzay, Director. P.O. Box 24168, Phila., PA 19139. 748-1929 or (201) 672-7106

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. Steppers use various body parts to maintain the strong rhythmic pulse needed for their routines: they clap, stomp their feet, snap their fingers, slap their chests, arms or legs, and pound a wooden staff against the ground—all to create a sound that keeps up the beat. The group does what they call "contemporary" and "traditional" steps, including routines mimicking the traditional steps of fraternity males. AKA Steppers get inspiration for their contemporary steps from many sources. Contact: Tina Morrison Step Mistress, 5459 N. 11th St., Phila., PA 19141. 324-6763

The Arthur Hall Dancers grew out of the Arthur Hall Afro-American Dance Ensemble. After Hall left the city in 1988, Evangeline Brown, a member of his original troupe, continued to perform Hall's dances to public school audiences through the organization Young Audiences. The current troupe continues Hall's legacy and current performers are all former members of Hall's original troupe: Van Williams, Gregory Jarman, James Cory, Vernon Forrest and Evangeline Brown. Each has been involved in African dance and drum culture for decades. Contact: Evangeline Brown, Director, 2016 N. Carlisle St., Phila., PA, 19121. 232-7710 or 977-7707 (c/o Young Audiences).

Asona Aberade Shrine, Inc. was created in 1976 "to promote African sacred dance and drumming and the traditional religion and philosophy of the Akan culture of Ghana." Director Korantemaa Ayeboafo was the first woman drummer to have an influence upon Philadelphia African drum culture and to take on the spiritual responsibilities of the drum. She has continued to develop her knowledge and skills. Contact: Nana Korantemaa Ayeboafo, Director. 1730 N. 27th St., Phila., PA 19121. 763-4054

The Blue Nile African Drummers and Dancers started in the mid 1970's with the merging of the Temple of the Black Messiah and the Marcus Garvey Sule Dancers. The founders (Jabali Wazuri, Karima Nkrumma and Fikisha Kusanya) hoped to create an opportunity for African American children to learn about African dance and drumming; they promote African culture, the use of the drum, and the movement of liberation. Wazuri's teachers taught him a wide range of rhythms from West Africa, Cuba and Brazil, and he has also become adept at mixing drumming with oral poetry and singing, including praise chants. Contact: Jabali Wazuri, 1856 N. 21st St., Phila., PA 19121. 684-3476

The Diaspora Dance Theater and Research Group was started by Katrina Hazzard in 1983 at Cornell University as a way of perpetuating African-derived dance forms and providing a performance alternative for university students there. Public appearances have included lectures and demonstrations based on Hazzard's research into African and

African American forms of dance and music. Contact: Dr. Katrina Hazzard, Director, 5011 Catharine St., Phila., PA 19143. 474-3510

Ekuejo West African Drum and Dance Egbe is, according to Director Oriyomi Isha Imani, "a community of people who have now evolved into a society or Egbe." Imani initially founded Ekuejo in 1987 to give African dancers in Philadelphia an opportunity to learn new skills locally. Her own first teacher was South African Alex Mwakapungire at Overbrook High School. She went on to study West African dance and Dunham technique with Folami Adefumi, Baba Ishangi, John Hines, Kariamu Welsh-Asante, and Ione Nash. Ekuejo Egbe sponsors a weekend series of African dance workshops at the University City Arts League featuring various instructors and a wide range of African and African-derived dance forms. Contact: Oriyomi Isha Imani, Director, c/o University City Arts League, 4226 Spruce St., Phila., PA 19104. 382-7811

Kofi Gyemerah (Arthur Driscoll) had been involved with African dance and drumming long time before he began walking and dancing on stilts in 1979. He learned from many other local artists. He now trains people on stilts and has developed a masquerade society. Kofi Gymerah, 129 N. Conestoga St. Phila., PA 19139. 747-4203

Groove Phi Groove Social Fellowship, Inc. is a national organization founded in 1962 at Morgan State College out of the Black Power Movement to serve as an outlet for those African Americans who were discriminated against in Greek letter organizations (African American and European) because of their social status and/or skin complexion. The issues continue. Michael Chang, the group's President, describes how Groove Phi Groove, the largest African American organization on the Penn campus, has been excluded from stepping shows. Contact: Michael Chang, Groove Phi Groove Social Fellowship, Inc., PO Box 30751, Phila., PA 19104. 552-5960 (beeper).

Ibeji Performing Arts Company was founded by Jeannine Lee Osayande and Hodari Gregory Banks in 1991 "to spread and share the beauty and brilliance of African and African rooted culture." The group, which also includes Tamara McMichael, presents residencies, lectures, demonstrations, workshops, community classes and concerts. Osayande states that the company's focus is on dances from Haiti, Brazil and West Africa (Guinea, Mali, Senegal, the Senegambia region). Influences are diverse. Contact: Jeannine Osayande and Hodari Banks, 313 Brighton Avenue, Swarthmore, PA 19081. 544-5204

Ice and the Philadelphia and New York Skate Masters perform jazz and freestyle dance on roller skates. Founder Clyde "Ice" McCoy learned tap and jazz dance as a teenager, and often watched friends who were involved with stepping; he eventually decided to adapt his dance movements to roller skates. His first performances were with Lisa Campolo at Africamericas Talent Show in 1987. They performed as a duo and McCoy later added several other skaters, becoming "Wizards on Wheels." After leaving that group in early 1993, Ice formed this current ensemble. Contact: Clyde "Ice" McCoy, Director. 2741 Oakford St., Phila., PA 19146. 465-3504.

Ile Baba Mi Cultural Center (Yoruba for "my father's house") was founded in 1978 by Ron Payton, to offer educational and cultural programs focusing on "traditional African consciousness" and including dance, music and drama. Celebrations have included the Sankofa Festival and Egungun Masquerade. The building is now under construction and no pro-

Below: Dorothy Wilkie dancing with Kulu Mele at ODUNDE, 1994. Drummers from the drum and dance ensemble Kikayu: Kikayu, Truck, and Wilkie. Photos: Thomas B. Morton

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grams are currently being offered. Payton credits his own knowledge to the teachings of Arthur Hall, Melvin Purnell, John Jones, Karen Warrington, Saka Acquaye, John Hines, and Jaqué Wolume. He has committed himself to "classical" African dances and movements that are found in many parts of Africa. Contact: Ron Payton, Ile Baba Mi Cultural Center, PO Box 38093, Phila., PA 19140. 848-4065

Ione Nash Dance Ensemble (INDE). In her 36-year career, Ms. Ione Nash, founder, director and choreographer of INDE, has created more than 600 dances and almost none have been documented. Ms. Nash's career in dancing started in 1950, when she was in her late 20s. She was first drawn to ballet but expanded to modern, jazz, tap, and "interpretive" dance (what African dance was called at the time). She worked with Saka Acquaye and Arthur Hall before founding, in 1960, her own company and dance school in the 5800 block of Germantown Avenue. She was the first African American to run a business on that street, and had to go to court to keep the right for her drummers to perform. Times have changed. Ms. Nash has worked with Haitian dancer John Hines (from the cabaret circuit to Philadelphia's Crystal Ballroom and New York venues). Ms. Nash has taught children, teen and adult classes (and companies) over the years; most local African dance companies in Philadelphia include dancers who have trained with Ms. Nash. INDE's repertoire features a mix of Brazilian, Haitian and Congolese dance with an American influence and includes classic Nash pieces. Contact: Ione Nash, 6052 N. 21st St., Phila., PA 19138. 438-4588.

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Opposite top: Women's Sekere Battery in the Africamericas Parade. Omomola Iyabunmi, center

Jaasu Ballet, c. 1989, at Africamericas Festival Folklore Day at the Ridgeway Building.

Photos by Thomas B. Morton

Jaasu Ballet was created in 1985 by Daryl Burgee, Steve Jackson and Arthur Driscoll who wanted to educate people about African dance and drumming and to perpetuate these forms in Philadelphia's African American community. Performances feature master drummers (John Wilkie, Robert Crowder, Steve Jackson and Daryl Burgee), veteran dancers (Oyin Renee Harris, Dorothy Wilkie, Sandy Pugh, and Wilhemina Fisher), and stilt walkers (Arthur Driscoll and Vernon Forrest). Most of the dances in Jaasu's repertoire originate in West Africa—Senegal, Gambia and Guinea—and several choreographers have contributed to the group's growth and development. Contact: Daryl Burgee, Director. 6423 N. 13th St., Phila., PA 19126. 224-5439

Kappa Alpha Psi. In the local chapter, Step Master Paul Williams teaches new brothers how to step while they are pledging. If a brother decides to continue stepping after his initiation, he will come to rehearsals and participate in step shows. The team's fancy footwork includes acrobatics and twirling, hooking and jumping over canes. All African American fraternity and sorority stepping teams have a unique style, often related to the predominant style or type of the overall organization and the Kappa Alpha Psi steppers have brought their distinctive style to competitions and to national and cable television, where they have appeared on "Star Search" and Black Entertainment T.V. Contact: Paul Williams, Step Master, 963 Columbus Ave., New York, NY 10025. (212) 865-6944

Kulu Mele African American Dance Ensemble (Speaking for our Ancestors) is characterized by a strong feeling of an extended family, because most Kulu Mele members have been perpetuating African culture together for the past ten to twenty years. Kulu Mele includes John Wilkie, Kenneth Fauntleroy, Greg Jarman, Anthony Jones, Quensheba, Dorothy Wilkie, Benita Binta Brown, Oyin Harris, and Baba Ibikunle Bey (Robert Crowder). The group features both new and traditional works. Very careful attention is paid to the rhythms, costumes and dance movements so as not to deviate from traditional patterns. Contact: Dorothy Wilkie, Choreographer, Kulu Mele, 2007 W. Turner St., Phila., PA 19121. 424-5514, or Baba Robert Crowder, 5448 Locust St., Phila., PA 19139. 476-9242.

LEJA Dance Theatre was founded by Leon Evans and Jaye Allison in 1979 as contemporary American modern dance theater inspired by

Oriyomi Isba Imani, 1994. Photo: Thomas B. Morton

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the works of Alvin Ailey. The two were teenagers when they began an after-school dance group at the High School of Creative and Performing Arts. (Originally, according to Allison, the organization saw themselves in competition with the Scanner Boys). The company has since reorganized, and been influenced by a rangeof new influences including that of Maurice Hines. LEJA became known widely in 1984 when they danced as part of the Power 99 Dancers. This year (1994) LEJA will celebrate its 15th anniversary with a revival of classic LEJA ballets. Contact: Jaye Allison or Leon Evans, LEJA Dance Theatre, PO Box 59421, Phila., PA 19102. 472-1811 (Allison); 235-2064 (Evans).

Mas Camp (Wayne and Associates) was established in Philadelphia in 1992 to educate the public, and especially young people of Trinidadian and Tobagan ancestry, about the culture of Trinidad and Tobago. They have held Caribbean Mask Camps for West Philadelphia youth, and injected the mask and costume traditions of Trinidad and Tobago into mainland parades—including the Africamericas Parade, and parades and festivals held regionally. Contact: Wayne Peters, Director, Mas Camp/Wayne and Associates, 6509 Woodland Avenue, Phila., PA 19142. 729-3427.

Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity stepping is said to have begun by 1924, as a way to promote the fraternities—like an enhanced cheer. It is now seen as both a source of entertainment and a means of displaying cultural and organizational pride. Most of Phi Beta Sigma's step routines use polyrhythms. For example, each of three lines of stepping brothers may create its own beat by stomping and clapping, but they all mesh together. Contact: James Elam, Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, 505 Kater Street, Phila., PA 19147. 627-4157

The Progressive Center for Dance opened its doors to the Philadelphia community in 1981 with the intent of providing African American youth with a low-cost introduction to the dance arts, including ballet, tap, jazz, ethnic and street funk. The underlying aim is to foster self-esteem, self-respect, self-awareness and confidence in children. Each year, the Center produces a student performance at the Zellerbach Theate. Contact: Carol Cubbage-Davis, Director. 6249 Market St., Phila., PA. 19139. 748-7101

Rennie Harris has been dancing since his teens. In 1979, Harris founded the Scanner Boys—a pop, lock and break dance group, which met with considerable success, appearing at the Smithsonian's Festival of American Folklife in 1984. The Scanner Boys continue to perform, and Harris now choreographs for both the Scanner Boys and Pure Movement, a group which he created when he was commissioned in 1992 by Movement Theatre International to create five new pieces in concert format. He continues to explore the endless possibilities of Hip Hop dance. Contact: Rennie Harris, 739 Corinthian Street, Phila., PA 19130. 765-2818.

Melvin J. Purnell began dancing in 1967. His first teacher was Pepe Highsmith who taught Dunham technique at the Sherwood Recreation Center in West Philadelphia. Purnell went on to study with John Hines and the Derby Sisters. He joined the Arthur Hall Afro-American Dance Ensemble in 1969 where he became a principal dancer. In 1974, Purnell began to teach under the direction of Karel Hook and Arthur Mitchell in New York. He joined the Dance Theater of Harlem in 1975.Purnell describes himself as a hard and demanding teacher, and believes that the discipline he instills in the class shows up on stage. Contact: Melvin J. Purnell. 1049 N. 46th St., Phila., PA 19131. 477-5440

Spirit of Sankofa began in December of 1988 through the Pan African Studies Community Education Program (PASCEP) Youth Program at Temple University. The group has become known for exuberant dances that perpetuate West African dance with youth as core performers. (For example: "Lamba", "Sierra Leone", "Oba Koso", "Fanga", "Mandiani", "Kou Kou" and "Sistahood"). Choreographers like Melvin Purnell and artists from Senegal and Sierra Leone have collaborated with Benita Binta Brown in developing the repertoire. Contact: Benita Binta Brown, Artistic Director, 1220 N. Broad Street, Apt. #1202, Phila., Pa. 19121. 236-5004

Traditional African American Drum Society You can't talk about dance in Philadelphia without talking about drums, and Philadelphia has since at least the 1930s been home to a vital community of hand drummers. Their rhythms reflect interchanges with Nigerian, Ghanaian, Caribbean and African American drummers. TAADS first began in the 1970s to document and preserve traditional hand drum-

ming; it reorganized in 1986 to increase awareness of the significance and possibilities of the drums. TAADS now numbers more than 55 persons and offers many programs. Contact: Hank Jackson, TAADS, 340 E. Haines St., Phila., PA 19144. 848-DRUM

Uburu Community in U.S.A. is a two-year-old organization of people from the town Uburu, in Ibo-land, Nigeria. The group was organized in 1992 to attend to the welfare of the Uburu people, and especially to preserve Uburu cultural heritage. The organization brings people together through cultural events like an annual Nigerian Independence Celebration on October 1st which includes (as do most traditional observances, formal and informal) cultural attire, foods and dance. Typical African dance is done by women, as "through the dance we express our cultural heritage." Contact Ezikte Akuma, President, Uburu Community in U.S., P.O. Box 2683, Willingboro, N.J. 08046. (609) 877-4586

Van Williams (The Fabulous Neck Tye Party) was inspired by his father, to become involved in fine arts—drawings, paintings, and clay sculptures. He began lessons in modern dance at the age of six under the instruction of Alfreda Mahler, and he sees dance as a spiritual and expressive vehicle. Williams' creation of the Neck Tye Party evolved when he made a skirt out of neck ties that worked like a fiber skirt. Williams tries to stay within a traditional African ethos wherein the mask is a teacher and social critic. Contact: Van Williams, 7332 Sommers Road, Phila., PA 19138. 548-1468

Women's Sekere Society: Omomola Iyabunmi sees herself as presenting rather than performing African culture; the distinction is a significant one, and she never imagined that she would be playing an instrument publicly with any ensemble, let alone leading her own group. Nor does she consider herself a dancer—yet she dances regularly as a praise dancer at traditional ceremonies of worship. She has been a member of Kulu Mele and Kikayu. She organized the first appearance of the Women's Sekere Battery (with 10 women—it later grew to 25) in 1988 at the Africamericas Festival. In response to requests, she formed the Women's Sekere Ensemble with Jackie Corley, Imani Ife, Quensheba, Ella Ghant, Marcy Francis, and Oriyomi Isha Imani. The last two remain, with Iyabunmi, ensemble members. Iyabunmi has continued to develop the ensemble, teach classes and offer workshops. Contact: Omomola Iyabunmi, 45 East City Avenue, Suite #336, Bala Cynwyd, PA 19004. 386-9627 or (609) 728-5708

Yoruba Egbe Society was started informally in 1988 by Iya Omowunmi Ogundaisi to enlighten African people in the United States about the Yoruba culture and to help them to understand why there is a need to embrace the full culture of Africa. In their gatherings, Yoruba Egbe offers an opportunity for people in the organization to participate and explore the full gamut of African culture including language, foodways, clothing, music and dance. We want to include mention of this organization here, because the Society provides one opportunity for African Americans to be involved in bembes, to dance and drum together in a spiritual context, and to actively use dancing and drumming as means of praise and sacred expression. Contact: Sekou Osagyefo, Yoruba Egbe, PO Box 42876, Phila., PA 19101. 735-1511

—Benita Binta Brown

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Top: Ione Nash, 1994

Just above: Oyin Harris

Photos: Thomas B. Morton

"There's nobody who's ever lived on the face of this Earth who wasn't at one time enslaved": Lee Carter's Underground Railroad Paintings

Lee Carter sits in his living room in Hayti, Pennsylvania, a predominantly African American section of Coatesville settled in the 19th century. He is surrounded by his paintings, on every wall, in every room, on a bed in the guest room, on the back porch, on all three sides of the stairwell, on easels, in the dining room. Each is a picture of a building, and he has identified most of these buildings, through his personal research, as stops on the Underground Railroad. The paintings are small; the largest is less than three feet by two feet, and most are only about a foot or two across. On the walls they hang adjacent to one another, building upon building, station upon station, and it's possible to trace the routes to freedom from painting to painting, if you know the right order. The buildings are deceptively serene, except for the one or two marked "SLAVE AUCTION" in red, and the paintings of empty, melancholy slave quarters. Most paintings derive from photos, from old postcards, or engravings in hundred-year-old books, and indeed some of the buildings, like the James Walker House in Kennett Square, are no longer standing. In addition, there are portraits, Harriet Tubman and Sojourner Truth, and a painted reproduction of the famous photograph—once circulated hand to hand by Abolitionists to rally people to their cause—of an enslaved man named George, who received 51 lashes for returning late to his plantation. There are also paintings of symbols used to mark Underground Railroad stations, the Jacob's Ladder quilt pattern, and the lantern holder ornament on the front lawn. And there is now the beginnings of a new series, images and portraits from the contemporary Civil Rights movement, a portrait of Rosa Parks and a painting of side by side water fountains, white and colored.

Mr. Carter reflects on the transformations of his life that led him to depict this topic on canvases, his voice filled with emotion: "I was totally ignorant of who I am and what has happened to humanity, and… the way it went about happening.

"So when I came out of school…I thought the world was a big juicy apple, and I was a terrific athlete. I thought there was a big pot of gold there waiting for me. But then I ran into something called racism, discrimination. And …it devastated me for a while, and if I hadn't have had very strong people around me, it's no telling what would've happened to me. But I had… my father who had faced this stuff before me, I had coaches who… talked to me, who told me about this, and they explained the whole works. When I came out of school, it was before Jackie Robinson had broken the color barrier and I had been scouted by eight major league ball teams, but I was a Black. So that was the end of that. Except one. One of the teams was a, was a scout by the name of [Eddie Gottlieb]. He did send me to the Negro National League with the Philadelphia Stars. But there, there was the beginning of racism for me at its greatest, because at that precise moment I played, I had been playing with four young white fellows from the West end of Coatesville, we all grew up together, and these guys were darn good ballplayers, terrific ballplayers. We had played playground baseball, sandlot baseball, American Legion baseball, I remember the day vividly when we all got letters from the scouts. And they went to the Phillies ballpark at Baker Bowl in Philadelphia, and I was sent to the home field of the Philadelphia Stars at 44th and Parkside. That was a separation of five guys who… all played sports, football, baseball, basketball, all in the same team—nobody ever separated us because of color, till that one time there.

"It was then that…I knew that there was something, …there were forces that were beyond my control, or anybody else's control if you were a certain color…. I did not learn this fully—what these forces were—until I started painting and doing my own research, and that's when it really opened my eyes as to, as to what happens, you know. Because before that I lived in a dream world. And the world I lived in was fictional. What I hoped, and dreamed for would never, would never happen."

Born in 1920, Lee Carter grew up in the small Chester County town of Coatesville, living with his family, including his elderly great-grandmother who moved to Pennsylvania from Appomattox, Virginia, where she had been enslaved. He painted a little in high school, but not seriously, eventually played ball with the Philadelphia Stars in the Negro leagues for a few months, but returned home to the small town life where he was comfortable.

Throughout his childhood, his great-grandmother had never spoken to him of slavery. "Slavery was… brutal, was the most brutal period in American history, for Black people. And for…most Blacks to recount slavery or, or to listen to someone else recount slavery is…rehearsing or bringing back to them terrible things …that they want no part of. The same thing happened to me with my great-grandmother. My great-grandmother would talk to me about any subject, until I mentioned slavery. And then there was no more said. She was…finished with any conversation. And… it might be two or three days before she'd even talk to you again. So…slavery for most Black people was …as I said was something that they didn't want to be …reminded of. It was a terrible, terrible experience for 'em, and it's, it's still today, it's still today that a lot of people don't want to hear this. I get into, I lecture, I lecture a lot of schoolchildren, I lecture a lot of grownups, and there are people who totally do not wish to hear anything mentioned about slavery."

He worked in a steel mill for his adult life, raised seven children with his wife Dorothy, and retired early in 1977. After a few years of retirement, he returned to his longtime interest in painting, and began taking classes. Combining his love for painting with an interest in the Civil War period and a desire to know more about the Abolitionists and activists on the Underground Railroad, he began to paint the first of what would become a series of, at last count, 45 oil paintings of Underground Railroad sites and images. In 1980 he created the first painting, of a house in what is now Caln Township on the north side of U.S. Route 30. The house, then part of a 185-acre farm, had 400 feet of tunnels which ran out to the woods near the Veterans Hospital. Now used as Coatesville School district administration building, he painted the building after a photo he took. The tunnels still exist, but are sealed off.

"My interest in the Underground Railroad started first because my great-grandmother was a slave from Appomattox, Virginia, and…between that and the fact that I got embarrassed one day because I went to…integrated schools in the Coatesville area and I knew nothing about Black history. My wife went to segregated schools in Coatesville. And one, one day years after we were married I came in from work and she's humming a tune that I'd never heard before. … I asked her the name of it and … and she told me it was the Negro National Anthem, and I almost flipped because I had never, I'd never totally never known that there was a Negro National Anthem. So, when I blurted out that there wasn't any such thing I was totally embarrassed because I showed how ignorant I was. I didn't know anything about my own history. So between my great-grandmother who refused to talk about slavery and the fact that I didn't even know that there was a Negro National Anthem, is what was the force that drove me then and still drives me to paint and learn more about Black history."

Thus began his project, which led to an ever-developing network of personal contacts—people who respond to his interest and efforts by writing and telling him about more and more Underground Railroad sites. "My first painting was of one of the oldest places, was one of the Underground Railroad hiding places right outside the city of Coatesville, and through newspaper articles and write-ups about that, that began the, a long line of people calling me and writing me and telling me about, to take a look at their places, because they thought that their places were part of the Underground Railroad. So that really began my venture back into, into painting."

The link to the past, the personal knowledge of people who survived, and the stories of those who were brave enough to resist, have continued to be his motivation. He says that "what…really made me paint the Underground Railroad, the determining factor was my great-grandmother being, being a slave." He has talked to older people who have told him about what happened to their mothers or grandparents. "This is a way you get a lot of information you know firsthand. Yeah. …I worked with a fellow oh for years in the steel plant. I knew him for about 25 years, and I, and he, of course, of course we never, between the two of us we never brought up history. And years after I retired I had the opportunity to talk to his sister. And in talking to his sis-

Lee Carter and his Underground Railroad paintings, at home. Photo: Bill Westerman ter I found, found out that he and his sister were the great-grandchildren of Chicken Thompson, who was at the Christiana riot house in 1851. And I worked with this man, I didn't work with him, but I saw him every day of his working life, passing by the building where I worked, and that never came out until years after I was retired and he was retired. And they were his great-, his great-grandfather was at the, the Christiana riot up there."

After all these works, he never paints one of these sites without first documenting, as best he can with either oral or archival materials, that it indeed served as a station stop on the Underground Railroad. "I never do the paintings until I verify the fact that's what they were, that they were used for that. Because I tell you, when you go out and give a lecture or something, you'd be surprised what people know. And if you get up there and make a statement that's not true, they'll hang you. I know that to be a fact. You have to know and be specific. And I'll tell you something else. If you make a statement to somebody you better have, you better have the references to where you got it if you expect them to believe you. Don't make a statement and then when they ask you for a reference and you can't, you can't tell 'em where you found it. You make a fool of yourself.... If you make a statement to 'em, you want to be sure that you, you can tell 'em where to go find it." He keeps extensive files in his house. In these files are notes, clippings, photos, personal letters. Every day, he says, mail arrives from people telling him about another site. After nearly ten years of painting, exhibitions, and publicity, his mission is well-known. Every local article about him brings an inquiry or a phone call.

For him, the project has been educational, even inspirational. He has come to admire individual heroes, the Harriet Tubmans and Thomas Garretts, and groups of people who were concerned with freedom even then. Chief among these are the Quakers, though Mr. Carter acknowledges there were more than a few Quakers, as there were even African Americans, who profited from the slave trade as well. Still, Quaker buildings figure prominently in his collection. He calls Uwchlan Quaker Meetinghouse, "the most beautiful building I've ever seen." Its painting hangs in his stairwell.

He describes the people who took great risks, who came forward and used their own homes and money. These people, he adds, could have been dealt with severely—jailed or shot. "There were a lot of people who, who risked everything to participate in the Underground Railroad. And one of the most outstanding and

Lee Carter and his Underground Railroad paintings, at home. Photo: Bill Westerman

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bravest people that I, that I have ever read about or encountered in researching is Harriet Tubman. I don't know how the lady could have been so, so brave. But she was. I guess she had a, she had a purpose and, and she did it. And then you have people like Thomas Garrett from Upper Darby who personally took 2700 slaves to freedom. Yeah. So there were a lot of people who… participated in the movement."

"It's very hard to, to try to figure out how, or to accept the fact that one human being can, can be so harsh towards another human being. That's the part that really… tears me apart…how you can treat… another human being like he's inhuman.… I don't understand that.…Researching [the] Underground Railroad, I get into a lot of these places where there still are visible the actual hiding places, and what these people went through to take 'em into their houses, and how deathly afraid the slaves must have been to be there, and how you had, how they had to get them out of there, and to safety and… you begin to wonder how anybody could go through anything like that, when all the time there's somebody looking for 'em with dogs and, and guns, you know, so. It takes a special, special type of person to do that."

For those who want to know about the past, and specifically about slavery, Mr. Carter recognizes the importance of the Underground Railroad: "I think it's about the easiest way to get involved in the conversation [about slavery], yeah...is to talk about the…Underground Railroad. His paintings are documents, testaments to a struggle for freedom, an ongoing struggle which involves all people, in all times. "If people live in this world and aren't acquainted with what has happened in the past, they're not, they're not prepared for when it comes again. And it will come again quicker, if they don't know what happened to people before them. And that's why I said it's always, it's a necessity that people know, know these things. So when that, when it starts back again somebody will be wise enough or intelligent enough to see that, to see what's happening. There're, there are a lot of people who, who never take time to think that history repeats itself. If people would only research and read they would find, they would find for themselves, one basic thing about, about slavery, one basic thing about the Underground Railroad: Every living being… in this world, who ever lived on the face of this Earth, has at one time or another been enslaved by another living being. But see people don't see, they don't believe, or they're, or it's not touching them at that precise moment. So they go on as if it never happened. They go on as if, say the case of slavery in this country. You mention slavery in this country and most people think that is was an issue, it was a Black issue, and that, and that this country, this was the only place that it happened. …

"Everyone who ever lived on the face of this Earth was a slave at one time. So the moment that people can get this into their heads, that this happened, then it, then it becomes a different, a different issue. People can, people can focus better, understand better.

"I talk to a lot of groups and people are totally, totally amazed when you tell 'em about slavery, and about this, There's nobody, there's no living being, there's nobody who's ever lived on the face of this Earth who wasn't at one time enslaved. He was either… enslaved by, by men who made war, in some other country, and he went in and took all the wealth, took the women and the children, captured them, took them back to his country. There's always some form of enslaving the people who were conquered."

For Lee Carter, and for others, the Underground Railroad has become a way of life, and is part of a compelling and contemporary struggle. While easy explanations about why people are still inspired by the Underground Railroad may seem facile, finding "the meaning of freedom" for those who devote their lives to this topic—both white and African American—is much more elusive, even ethereal. Their search is grounded in lifetimes of experience with racism, discrimination, segregation, and ignorance. Those who do research (both archival and oral) commemorating the Underground Railroad are activists in a very current, political enterprise. They fight to include the Underground Railroad in school curricula, perform reenactments and historical impersonations, and promote expanded use of historical markers to delineate the various "freedom trails." The battles that gave rise to the Underground Railroad, the tasks begun by the Abolitionists, are not complete, they warn. These individuals—historians, archivists, folklorists, oral historians, teachers, artists, some professional, many amateur—speak with a prophetic voice about the state of human relations today. Some, like Lee Carter, can devote ten or twenty-five years or more to gleaning what information they can, and most important pass it on to those who will continue in the work. The Underground Railroad never ended, neither in Canada, nor with Emancipation. There are those who know this.

On looking at one of Mr. Carter's paintings, I remarked that for a fugitive slave it must have been terrifying to hide in a dark crawl space in a small Quaker meetinghouse. "It had to be. It had to be," he concurred. "Why, there's even one place in southern Chester County my wife and I were. They pulled up part of the floor, just lifted a board up out of there. And it's about that wide, a section, maybe about, maybe this long, and that's where they put, put somebody down in there. That takes a lot of nerve." Lee Carter gently admires the commitment to justice that so many Chester County people demonstrated 150 years ago. Acts of freedom and arts of freedom are often small and simple, carried out with empathy and a sense of purpose.

—Bill Westerman

Recognizing Cultural Barriers to Justice in Greater Philadelphia

Cultural differences are a major factor in determining whether a person or community will have full and equal access to the legal system. Activist Chris Schweitzer, director of the Kensington Joint Action Council, has observed that "our system assumes that people are brought up in the system." But, of course, this is not necessarily so. Nor is the formal legal system the only effective means of resolving disputes. For many, the legal system does not present itself as an accessible means of finding solutions to social and personal problems. Nor is it always engaged voluntarily. As Jules Epstein, a criminal defense attorney and former public defender, observed, for many groups of people the legal system is far more likely to "ensnare" them than it is to be a resource for social change.

But whether voluntarily entering into the legal process or not, the client is better served when working in tandem with counsel knowledgeable about the issues of concern to the client, and sensitive to the difficulties that that client faces. The client can become an ally in the strategy and investigation of the case, but only when working with an effective lawyer who is aware of the barriers the client faces. Many of these barriers are not individual; they are cultural—that is, they stem from the client's (and equally, the lawyer's) affiliation with a social class, an ethnic group, a nationality, a language, a religion, and a gender. Some of these features will be more prominent than others in a given case, and far from being irrelevant, sometimes these features can make the difference, if approached thoughtfully, in the resolution of the case.

In the past year, the Philadelphia Folklore Project undertook a project to explore some of the ways that cultural differences and assumptions were impediments to justice. We initially saw our task as one of determining how to find ways for legal service providers to better serve groups traditionally neglected in American society, namely recent immigrants and refugees, poor and homeless individuals, women, and members of cultural, linguistic, and religious minorities. What we found, in many cases, is that it is imperative that legal service providers develop an awareness of—not to mention resources for—understanding the cultural differences that distinguish groups in U.S. society. The first step is for lawyers and social service providers to become aware of their own cultural assumptions, their lack of awareness about other cultures, and the boundaries that separate one group from another.

Difference among individuals and groups transcends single factors such as class, gender, or cultural background. A political refugee, for example, may be a woman, a cultural minority in her homeland, a linguistic minority here, and may have little or no financial resources to hire a private attorney. Attempts, then, to address issues of discrimination, either de facto or de jure, will have to address more than one such variable of human culture and experience. The point is not to become an "expert" in "different" cultures, but to learn how to recognize the cultural barriers that prevent lawyers from providing adequate legal representation, and clients from receiving it, and then to transcend those boundaries.

These barriers can be found in the structure of the legal system, itself, and some means of achieving more equity will be changes in the system. But cultural assumptions and behavior shape matters that end up in the legal system, from beginning to end, from the commission of the act in dispute through the resolution. We have chosen to call these areas the parajudicial, referring to that part of the legal process which exists beyond, beneath, and above the officially recorded structure of the system of courts and litigation. By "parajudicial," we refer to four aspects of the legal process which, according to official court records and process, usually are ignored: 1) People's own cultural background, the system of culturally-based logic under which they operate, and their understandings of the legal system, based on their own cultural expectations and, in the case of recent immigrants, their understandings of the legal system in their country of origin. 2) The bias in the U.S. legal system, and how biases and class interests are expressed not only at the level of the law but even more at the level of the implementation and understanding of the law, that is, at the level of current practice among lawyers, judges, and officials. 3) Personally held beliefs about fairness, ways of resolving disputes, and beliefs about appropriate means of approaching problems, also culturally determined but rarely articulated—in short, beliefs about justice and injustice, right and wrong. 4) The informal communication that takes places at all stages of the legal process, from the initial conflict to meetings with lawyers in the investigation and through the litigation, in the home and at sidebar, during preliminary questioning of witnesses and on the stand. This includes the words recorded in official court documents, off-the-record remarks, intonations, insinuations, and gestures left out of the record, as well as all the private conversations between lawyers and client that shape the case. The parajudicial features, for the most part, are completely absent from the written record, and often turn out to be the significant features on which many cases and disputes turn. Hundreds of cultural interactions take place from the beginning of every dispute onward and of course also provide the historical background to the dispute.

For U.S. lawyers comfortable with the cultural assumptions of the legal system, it is hard to prove that the workings of the legal system can be discriminatory when on the surface the laws are not. Unless lawyers become aware of the cultural differences and learn how to recognize them, such injustice may be hidden in the unrecorded and often unofficial stages of the process, where few lawyers have been trained to look. Since the law itself on the surface doesn't discriminate—though the process very well may—it is harder to remedy situations such as this in the future by a simple change in the law or legal system. Awareness of the impact of culture, or the ways cultural barriers can manifest themselves, becomes a critical step for understanding the implications of cultural differences in the legal system.

And such awareness can lead directly to extra-legal remedies which in turn can produce more equitable practices. If we recognize and admit that much of the legal process occurs outside the official channels of dispute and litigation, we can begin to address ways to provide access to the legal system for those who may not realize the extent to which they can have or deserve access. Almost more importantly, perhaps, an understanding of different belief systems about justice and power can help legal service providers understand the complexities of unofficial culture—e.g. how to locate good translators, how to learn the historical background of refugee communities, why alibis may be hard to come by for factory or agricultural day laborers working "under the table," etc.—and can help providers recognize the vast array of legitimate alternative cultures and belief systems that coexist in this society.

For there is wide variety in (for example) what counts as acceptable behavior, home, family, and ability. Homeless individuals are subject to judgment in the courts, and certainly by police on the street, based on their physical appearance and on prejudices that judges and lawyers may hold based on their conceptions of how people should carry themselves and be groomed, based on the cultural "standard" of having a home. The fact that homeless people survive in a very different and violent world, where rules of private property and free speech are different if not nonexistent, places them at a cultural disadvantage when trying to work within a legal system devised and perpetuated by the housed, the propertied, and the educated. Housing and public assistance regulations are for the most part drawn up by middle-class and white bureaucrats, and their concept of family is based on their own cultural conception thereof. Asian American, Latino, and African American families often include relatives—grandparents, cousins, nieces and nephews—not considered part of the "nuclear" family by white middle-class people or by the regulations.

Disabled people's abilities and rights are generally defined by others—and without the consultation of the people both most knowledgeable and most affected. Among these issues is the right to be a parent. Custody issues are particularly sensitive in this area. Courts can decide for disabled parents when attendant care is a possible alternative to giving up custody, or can decide what kinds of reasonable accommodations can be made, but the definitions of "possible" and "reasonable" are more often determined by the courts, not by the disabled clients themselves. Disabled defendants may often not be judged by a jury of their peers, since blind and deaf people are not allowed on juries. Some courtrooms (and voting places) are still not physically accessible either. People may not know their rights, since written materials are often not available in Braille—including even the guidelines to civil rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act. Also,

Language barriers provide obvious problems. Despite the fact that translators are available in court for most proceedings (and it is not clear they are always available for juvenile hearings), the problem of translation goes well beyond that. Translators are not always available at every stage of the legal process. There are not guaranteed translators for police questioning, for police investigation, at 911 and other emergency and social services, and especially important, at every stage of the lawyer-client relationship. Defense attorneys, or civil attorneys representing clients who do not speak English, are severely hampered by their inability to find and compensate competent translators at every step of the way. (This is in many cases a real disincentive for some attorneys to treat clients who speak other languages with the same concern they may treat English-speaking clients). There is currently no system in Pennsylvania to certify competency in court interpreters. As the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania does not tape record proceedings, there is no system to check on the accuracy of translators after the fact. Their word, in English, becomes the official record of testimony, on which decisions literally affecting the life or death of the defendant may be based. And the current system of translation cannot even begin to address the more subtle aspects of translation, such as languages from countries that are highly socially stratified, where there are no checks to the prejudices of an educated bilingual translator who may be translating for someone from another background or social class.

In some cases there are no competent translators around for a given language. But the translation issue goes beyond all of the above factors. The current system operates almost as if sentences and ideas can be translated from one language to another on an exact word-for-word basis. They can't. A good translator must also be a good interpreter, but so long as there is room for interpretation, there will never be the exactitude that the whole pretense of the legal system depends on. Designating English the official language, or barring bilingual jurors from the pool, only makes matters worse. There must be an increased sophistication in the complexities of translation brought onto the legal process, even if that begins with the inclusion in appellate considerations of possible errors in interpretation at trial. Certifying interpreters would go a long way—at least towards eliminating those cases in which the witness is actually more bilingual than the court interpreter. But eventually the U.S. legal system will have to realize that fairness and equity mean more than magically or efficiently rendering the proceedings in English.

A person's assumptions about (and experiences with) the legal system in this country or another country of origin will affect every stage of the process, from the relationship of the client to the police, to their relationship with their lawyers, their choice of lawyer, and the decisions they may make in talking about the case with the police, the lawyers, and third parties. Unscrupulous lawyers and cultural "brokers" (self-appointed translators who recruit clients for English-speaking attorneys) may claim expertise or results they do not have and cannot deliver.

These comments do not assume there to be a hierarchical system wherein lawyers provide assistance, clients receive it and therefore are the only ones in need of "help." What needs help is the system itself at all levels; insofar as it fails large sectors of the population, it fails almost everybody. In significant ways, those who need the most help are lawyers and legal service providers themselves, for if they remain unaware of the import of the cultural and historical barriers they confront, they cannot competently serve the interests of their clients and their clients' communities. Attorneys have much to learn from the constituent populations they serve, and thus need access to the cultural systems from which their clients come, just as those who have the need of lawyers must have access to the legal system.

A goal, then, would be to begin to see the case from the client's point of view, not merely from the lawyer's—and thus legal representation as partnership could better serve the aims of the client. Such activity is restricted neither to the courtroom nor to the activities of lawyers alone. Respect for community input, and learning how to listen to the concerns of the communities, is essential to improving the process. The consumers will educate the service providers. The elusive question remains, however, how can we get legal service professionals—including lawyers, judges, and social workers—to look at things they now perceive as neutral, and re-see the situation, recognizing the full cultural complexity of the issues and, above all, the bearing that has on the case? One way to start would be the kind of grassroots interaction between communities and attorneys in unofficial, even informal, settings we advocate here.

—William Westerman

This essay is excerpted from a longer recently published PFP Working Paper, "Cultural Barriers to Justice in the Law in Philadelphia: Background, Bias and the Law," available through the PFP. Research was undertaken with the support of the Pennsylvania Humanities Council. Thanks to the many who helped.

NEWS

EVENTS:

SEPT. 21

Meeting for artists in Haddington to assess needs. Haverford Ave. Branch, Free Library, 5543 Haverford Ave., 6:30 pm. Call for information (238-0096)

OCT. 1

PFP 1994 Fall Grants Workshop. In the morning, join in a discussion about your needs and issues (and start to work towards some solutions). In the afternoon, learn to do it yourself: Demystify the grants process. Be in a mock grants panel. Draft a grant proposal. This is a hands-on, how-to, participatory workshop, led by Homer Jackson, for grassroots organizers, cultural agencies, traditional artists, and others interested in community-based folk arts. At the Philadelphia Folklore Project, 719 Catharine St., Phila., PA 19147. Free parking. 9 AM-5 PM (Bring a brown bag lunch). $5 Donation Requested. Spaces Limited: Reserve your place by calling 238-0096

UPDATES ON SOME PFP PROJECTS:

ART HAPPENS HERE will move our exhibits out of the Fleisher and into community settings around the city. Next spring, from April 20-May 20, we'll be working with artists and community groups to install 200-some photographs in diverse and sometimes unconventional spaces—from beauty parlors and barber shops to community art centers and libraries. You'll be able to see photos of traditional artists near where these same people live and work, and join in discussions about how our attitudes and policies about arts and culture enter our everyday lives. To do this project, we've sent researchers into city neighborhoods to talk (and listen) to traditional artists. We'd love to hear about *your* dreams and needs. Call us to get a questionnaire or give us your ideas about the state of folk arts (and the needs of folk artists): 238-0096.

THE SAMUEL YELLIN METALWORKS/WEST PHILADELPHIA FOLKLIFE SURVEY is a partnership with the Haddington Development Corporation. HDC has been working with community members to draw up a development plan, and we're participating by identifying traditional artists in Haddington and the broader West Philadelphia area, beginning to assess artists' needs, and helping to bring peoples' knowledge about traditional culture and art into the HDC planning process. As with the project above, we'd welcome a chance to talk with you—call us at 238-0096.

THANKS ARE DUE

We are able to undertake these projects thanks to your help and to grants from the William Penn Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts-Folk Arts Program, The Pew Charitable Trusts, the Lila Wallace Readers' Digest Community Folklife Program, the Pennsylvania Humanities Council, and the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts.

ANNOUNCING NEW PUBLICATIONS

"He Says You're Going to Play the Giant:" Ethnographic Perspectives on a Cambodian Arts Class in Philadelphia. By William Westerman. 1994. 43 pp. PFP Working Paper #8. $6

Cultural Barriers to Justice in the Law in Philadelphia: Background, Bias and the Law. By William Westerman. 68 pp. PFP Working Paper #9. $6.00

Movements of African Dance in Philadelphia. By Benita Binta Brown. PFP Working Paper #10. $5.00

Hmong Kwv Txhiaj. Compiled by Pang Xiong Sirirathasuk and T-Bee Lo, with the assistance of Ellen Somekawa. 6 songs, Hmong and English with commentaries. A project by SEAMAAC and the Hmong United Association. 1993. 32 pp. $7 (includes two home-mode audiotapes)

Chol Chhnam: Cambodian New Year's Celebrations in Philadelphia (1979-1993). Compiled by Leendavy Koung with the assistance of Wutha Chin. A project of SEAMAAC and the Cambodian Association of Greater Philadelphia, 1993. 30 pp. $6

Watch for our forthcoming volume on Cambodian folk opera (lakhon bassak) in Philadelphia.

WELCOME NEW STAFF!

We're delighted to tell you that we have hired a team of dedicated and thoughtful field researchers for ART HAPPENS HERE and the Yellin/West Philadelphia Project: Sandra Andino, is completing her PhD in Anthropology at Temple, and has a special interest in graffiti—the subject of the ART HAPPENS HERE show she is working on, which will open at the Taller Puertorriqueno, one of the community sites. To our work in Haddington, Cassandra Graves brings her West Philadelphia roots and her varied background in television and art, including experience with the Evelyn Graves Drama Ministries founded by her mother. Also working in Haddington is Teresa Jaynes, artist, organizer, teacher, and one of the founders of the Art Emergency Coalition. Troy Richardson, working with us thanks to a Winnet Internship from the Samuel Fels Fund is documenting Native American folk artists and assessing ther needs. Troy is Tuscarora/Saponi, an artist and activist, and in the Graduate School of Education at the University of Pennsylvania. Also participating in the team is Penn Folklore and Folklife grad student Hayley Thomas, interning with ODUNDE for the summer, and researching African diaspora traditions.

NEWS ABOUT OLD STAFF!

Longtime PFP staff members Jennifer Michael and Bill Westerman are finishing up projects and (we're sad to say) leaving us to devote full time to their dissertation work. Leendavy Koung, just returned from Cambodia, is completing work (with Bill Westerman and Prolung Khan Ngin) on a PFP book on Khmer lakhon bassak.

STAFF POSITION SEARCH REOPENED

The Philadelphia Folklore Project is seeking a full-time staffperson. This position offers an opportunity to imagine and create thoughtful long-term collaborative folklife projects that respond to community concerns and artists' needs. For a copy of the full job description, please call or write Michelle Jackson, Office Manager, Philadelphia Folklore Project, 719 Catharine St., Philadelphia, PA 19147. Deadline for applications is November 30, 1994

Philadelphia Folklore Project
STAFF
Director: **Debora Kodish**
Folklorists/cultural specialists: **Sandra Andino, Benita Binta Brown, Cassandra Graves, Teresa Jaynes, Leendavy Koung, Chiny Ky, Jennifer Michael, Prolung Khan Ngin, Troy Richardson, Bill Westerman**
Office Manager: **Michelle Jackson**

Works-in-Progress, the newsletter of the Philadelphia Folklore Project, is ordinarily published three times a year. Members also receive NEWS mailings with information about opportunities and events. For more information, please see the back cover, or call us at 238-0096.

Works-in-Progress is printed by Garrison Printers on recycled paper.

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WORKS IN PROGRESS

About the Philadelphia Folklore Project

Folklore means something different to everyone—as it should, since it is one of the chief means we have to represent our own realities in the face of powerful institutions. Here at the Philadelphia Folklore Project, we are committed to paying attention to the fundamental ways in which people organize, understand, and share their experiences and knowledge.... We're an 8- year-old independent public folklife agency with local roots, scholarly perspectives, activist programs, and a commitment to taking arts and culture seriously. We assist artists and communities, conduct research, organize around issues of concern, develop exhibitions, offer public programs, workshops and technical assistance, maintain an archive, and issue publications and resources. We depend upon your contributions to produce this newsletter and carry on the work described in its pages.

Join the Philadelphia Folklore Project and we'll give you the shirts off our back!

▸___ **$10 No frills.** You'll get issues of newsletters like this 3x/year, PFP news (quarterly news briefs to members only), invitations to our events, and public thanks

▸___ **$25 Individual.** Receive all the above benefits as well as reduced admission to PFP events, your own copy of one of our publications, 25% discount on PFP publications, a free set of PFP postcards, and a PFP cap.

▸___ **$35 Family.** (2 or more at the same address). All the above benefits, with reduced admissions for all at your address.

▸___ **$60 Contributing.** All above benefits, 2 books, and an ART HAPPENS HERE t-shirt. ($15 tax-deductible)

▸___ **$150 Supporting.** Receive all of the above benefits, two more publications and your choice of a PFP video. ($75 tax deductible)

▸___ **$250 Benefactor.** Receive all of the above benefits, and make a substantial contribution to keeping our programs vital. ($175 tax deductible)

▸___ **$500 Angel.** Receive all of the above benefits and a framed photograph of an image from the PFP archive. ($250 tax deductible).

▸___ **I want to join (and receive mailings) but am facing my own financial shortfall. I would consider providing in-kind services, helping with mailings, providing computer (MAC) consulting, working on a committee, or something else.**

▸**PLEDGE:** I wish to pledge $_____ per month to the PFP.

The PFP is registered with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as a charitable organization. A copy of the official registration and financial information may be obtained from the PA Dept. of State by calling toll free, within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

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